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**Contingent Workforce in Contemporary Organizations**

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# **Contingent Workforce in Contemporary Organizations**

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*First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor, Mr Theodoros Tsekos, for his support,  
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*I dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Elias, for his continuous trust, support and  
encouragement. Thank you for being my rock.*

## **Abstract**

The last 20 years are characterized by significant changes in the global economy. The financial crisis, which was followed by a deep recession, affected the way organizations operate, their strategy and the way they manage their employees. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has also created new challenges, which organizations must deal with.

In order to become more flexible, organizations have turned to alternative work arrangements. These forms of work have allowed organizations to reduce their operating costs by hiring only the necessary workers for the time they need them. Organizations also have access to talented and high skilled professionals, whom could not “afford” financially otherwise. From their point of view, employees seek those new ways of working, as they have more autonomy and flexibility in their work, which allow them to maintain a balance between their personal and professional life.

This dissertation attempts to highlight the subject of alternative work arrangements and the extent to which they have penetrated organizations. Through literature review, the most recent surveys and research related to this subject are reported. The different categories of professionals are mentioned as well as and the reasons why both organizations and employees choose these forms of work. The role of the Human Resources department is extremely vital. Reference is made to the ways this department should evolve in order to face the new challenges and to effectively manage the new mix of employees that exists in organizations.

This dissertation also attempts a first approach to the ways the Covid-19 pandemic has affected organizations, the labour market and in particular the alternative work arrangements.

A thorough analysis of the international, basically, literature revealed that the percentages of contingent workforce in organizations increase. Organizations characterize these professionals as strategic advantage and a mean that would allow them to evolve in the difficult and changing environment in which they operate.

On the other hand, the Covid-19 pandemic has affected these forms of work. The first indications show an increase in the percentage of contingent professionals in organizations,

but there is no possibility to draw a definite result, as the pandemic's dynamic character continues to affect organizations and employees.

**Key words**

Alternative work arrangements, contingent workforce, professionals, Human Resource Department, Covid-19 pandemic

## Περίληψη

Τα τελευταία 30 χρόνια χαρακτηρίζονται από πολύ σημαντικές αλλαγές στην παγκόσμια οικονομία. Η οικονομική κρίση, την οποία ακολούθησε μια βαθιά ύφεση, επηρέασε τον τρόπο με τον οποίο λειτουργούν οι επιχειρήσεις, την στρατηγική τους και τον τρόπο με τον οποίο διαχειρίζονται τους εργαζομένους τους. Η επίδραση της πανδημίας του Covid-19 δημιούργησε με την σειρά της νέες προκλήσεις, τις οποίες καλούνται να αντιμετωπίσουν οι επιχειρήσεις.

Στην προσπάθειά τους να γίνουν πιο ευέλικτες, οι επιχειρήσεις στράφηκαν στις εναλλακτικές (ή ευέλικτες) μορφές εργασίας. Αυτές οι μορφές εργασίας επέτρεψαν στις επιχειρήσεις να μειώσουν τα λειτουργικά τους κόστη, προσλαμβάνοντας μόνο το αναγκαίο προσωπικό για το χρονικό διάστημα που αυτό είναι απαραίτητο. Επίσης έχουν πλέον πρόσβαση σε ταλαντούχους και με υψηλή εξειδίκευση επαγγελματίες, τους οποίους δεν θα είχαν την δυνατότητα να τους προσεγγίσουν οικονομικά με άλλο τρόπο. Από την δική τους σκοπιά οι εργαζόμενοι υιοθετούν τους νέους τρόπους εργασίας, καθώς έχουν μεγαλύτερη αυτονομία και ευελιξία στην εργασία τους, οι οποίες τους επιτρέπουν να διατηρούν ισορροπία ανάμεσα στην προσωπική και στην επαγγελματική τους ζωή.

Ο σκοπός της συγκεκριμένης εργασίας είναι να αναδειχθεί το ζήτημα των εναλλακτικών μορφών εργασίας και ο βαθμός με τον οποίο έχουν διεισδύσει στις επιχειρήσεις. Μέσω βιβλιογραφικής ανάλυσης, αναφέρονται οι πιο πρόσφατες μελέτες που αφορούν στο συγκεκριμένο ζήτημα. Γίνεται λόγος για τις διάφορες κατηγορίες εργαζομένων και οι αιτίες για τις οποίες τόσο οι επιχειρήσεις όσο και οι εργαζόμενοι επιλέγουν αυτές τις μορφές εργασίας.

Σε όλη αυτή τη διαδικασία ο ρόλος του τμήματος του Ανθρώπινου Δυναμικού είναι ιδιαίτερα κρίσιμος. Γίνεται αναφορά στον τρόπο με τον οποίο το εν λόγω τμήμα θα πρέπει να εξελιχθεί προκειμένου να αντιμετωπίσει τις νέες προκλήσεις και να διαχειριστεί αποτελεσματικά το νέο μείγμα εργαζομένων που υπάρχει στις επιχειρήσεις.

Η εργασία επίσης επιχειρεί μία πρώτη προσέγγιση στους τρόπους με τους οποίους η πανδημία του Covid-19 επηρέασε τις επιχειρήσεις, την αγορά εργασίας και ειδικότερα την κατηγορία των εναλλακτικών μορφών εργασίας.

Βάσει της ενδελεχούς ανάλυσης της διεθνούς, κατά βάση, βιβλιογραφίας διαπιστώθηκε η τάση συνεχούς αύξησης των ποσοστών των εναλλακτικών μορφών εργασίας στις επιχειρήσεις, οι οποίες χαρακτηρίζουν αυτούς τους επαγγελματίες ως στρατηγικό πλεονέκτημα και ως έναν τρόπο να εξελιχθούν στο δύσκολο και μεταβαλλόμενο περιβάλλον στο οποίο δραστηριοποιούνται.

Από την άλλη, η πανδημία του Covid-19 έχει επηρεάσει τις συγκεκριμένες μορφές εργασίας. Οι πρώτες ενδείξεις δείχνουν αύξηση των ποσοστών των εργαζομένων μέσω εναλλακτικών μορφών εργασίας στις επιχειρήσεις, χωρίς ωστόσο να υπάρχει η δυνατότητα να εξαχθεί ένα σίγουρο αποτέλεσμα, καθώς ο δυναμικός της χαρακτήρας εξακολουθεί να επηρεάζει επιχειρήσεις και εργαζομένους.

### **Λέξεις- κλειδιά**

Εναλλακτικές μορφές εργασίας, Τμήμα Ανθρώπινου Δυναμικού, Εργαζόμενοι, Πανδημία Covid-19



## Table of Contents

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Abstract .....   | v   |
| Περίληψη.....  | vii |
| Table of Contents .....                                      | ix  |
| List of Abbreviations & Acronyms .....                       | x   |
| 1. Introduction .....  | 1   |
| 2. Contingent Workforce.....                                 | 4   |
| 2.1 Brief History.....                                       | 4   |
| 2.2 What is “contingent workforce”? .....                    | 5   |
| 2.3 Categories of contingent workers.....                    | 6   |
| 2.4. Growth of contingent workforce .....                    | 11  |
| 2.5 Benefits and risks of contingent work.....               | 19  |
| 3. Human Resource Management and Contingent Workforce .....  | 22  |
| 3.1 HR and relations with the other departments .....        | 22  |
| 3.2 Developing a contingent workforce strategy .....         | 25  |
| 3.3 HR and workforce analytics.....                          | 35  |
| 3.3.1 Why organizations use workforce analytics .....        | 35  |
| 3.3.2 Brief History.....                                     | 36  |
| 3.3.3 What are workforce analytics?.....                     | 38  |
| 3.3.4. Building a workforce analytics team.....              | 42  |
| 4. Contingent Workforce in the European Union .....          | 46  |
| 4.1 Introduction .....                                       | 46  |
| 4.2 Categories of contingent workers in European Union ..... | 46  |
| 4.2.1. Temporary Workers and Part time workers .....         | 46  |
| 4.2.2. Telework – ICT Mobile Work (T/ICTMW) .....            | 48  |
| 4.3. Contingent work arrangements in Greece.....             | 50  |
| 4.3.1. Evolution of Greek Labor Legislation .....            | 50  |
| 4.3.2. Categories of contingent workforce .....              | 54  |
| 5. Contingent work in the Covid-19 era.....                  | 58  |
| 5.1. Introduction .....                                      | 58  |
| 5.2 Pandemic and government measures .....                   | 58  |
| 5.3. Pandemic and organizations.....                         | 60  |
| 5.4. Pandemic and workers .....                              | 63  |
| 5.4.1. Pandemic and contingent workers .....                 | 64  |
| 6. Conclusions .....   | 69  |
| 6.1 Conclusion.....  | 69  |
| 6.2 Proposals for Further Research .....                     | 71  |
| Bibliography.....  | 72  |

## **List of Abbreviations & Acronyms**

HR                      Human Resources

## **1. Introduction**

Even though contingent work arrangements have become very popular in recent years, the reality is that those forms of work are not a new trend in the labor market. Actually, the first reference for those alternative forms of work is made in 1985 (Polivca,1996)<sup>4</sup> and in 1989 the definition of "contingent worker" (BLS,2018)<sup>5</sup> was given for the first time.

Both organizations and employees, each one for their own reasons, seek the establishment of contingent work arrangements. From one hand organizations struggle to cope with the changes and the new challenges of the business environment while from the employees' side the reasons depend on the generation to which each employee belongs.

Those changes create new challenges for the Human Resource department and its role should be upgraded in order to meet the new reality. New ways of managing all the organization's workforce, which now consists of both permanent employees and professionals who work under flexible work arrangements, should be developed. It is reasonable that the executives of the department should be properly trained while it is crucial to develop collaborations with the other departments of the organization.

In order to be effective, the modern Human Resources department has to evaluate a very large amount of data and for that reason, it is helpful the development of a workforce analytics program. The use of those programs allows organizations, after evaluating the available data, to make more accurate decisions.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic had a decisive effect on the percentages of flexible forms of work in organizations, in a different way for each category of professionals. Governments in most countries have been forced to take measures in order to support organizations and the labor market as well. Those measures helped mostly those professionals who work remotely or work in the IT sector but negatively affected professionals who usually replace permanent employees in the organizations' workplace.

The general purpose of this dissertation is to highlight the issue of alternative work arrangements and the extent to which they are accepted by organizations and workers. The implementation of those forms of work gain ground among contemporary organizations and

it is interesting to find out the benefits and challenges that follow the adoption of these forms of work.

In particular, the main questions the dissertation attempts to answer are the following:

1. Which are the main categories of contingent workers and what characteristics each category has?
2. What are the main reasons professionals and organizations prefer nontraditional work arrangements?
3. What is the role of Human Resource Department and how it should transform its practices in order to become more effective in managing the organization's workforce? How can workforce analytics programs help its modernization?
4. Which is the situation in Europe and Greece, as far as the alternative work arrangements is concern?
5. Which is the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic in the labour market and the contingent workers? Which is the role of the government and what was the reaction of the organizations?

The methodology used for the dissertation was literature review. For its development contemporary and up to date articles, studies and surveys were used, because the main aim of the dissertation was to capture the current "picture" of the subject under research.

In particular they were used:

1. Annual reports and surveys by established organizations, such as Deloitte, McKinsey & Company, Accenture, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), etc.
2. Articles and reports by international organizations such as International Labor Organization (ILO), the World Bank Group, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) etc
3. Surveys and reposts by governmental organizations, such as Eurofound, Eurostat, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistic etc

The main limitations of the work have to do with the lack of available contemporary publications, such as books and journals and therefore it relied heavily on reports from large organizations and government authorities. Also, as far as the Covid -19 pandemic is concerned, there is still no clear data on how it has affected the labor market, as most surveys use mainly data from the year 2020.

The work is structured in five chapters (plus the introduction), each of which is divided into several subsections. In particular, in the second chapter the concept of contingent worker is introduced and the various categories of professionals, who constitute the contingent workforce, are analyzed. There are also mentioned the reasons that led professionals and organizations to choose alternative work arrangements while in another part there are mentioned the advantages and disadvantages of contingent workforce.

The third chapter deals with the HR department and the changes that are needed in order to become more effective in human resource management. In particular, there are analyzed the collaborations the HR department should develop in order to effectively manage the contingent workforce as well as the necessary changes in HR practices. Another part of this chapter deals with workforce analytics. A throwback of workforce analytics is presented, followed by an analysis of their content as well as the process of creating a workforce analytics team in the organization.

The forth chapter deals with alternative work arrangements in the European Union. The prevalence of these forms of work in the countries of the European Union is observed, followed by the analysis of the different rates among countries. Then follows the analysis of the Greek contingent workforce labour market as well as and the evolution of Greek legislation in that subject.

In the fifth chapter of labor is analyzed the impact of the pandemic on the labor market. In particular, there are mentioned the ways in which governments and organizations reacted to the pandemic, as well as the extent to which the labor market and the contingent workforce were affected by it.

In the sixth and last chapter are discussed the main findings of the dissertation.

## 2. Contingent Workforce

### 2.1 Brief History

The time period between 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century was characterized by spectacular improvements of working conditions. Some key features that could describe that era and played a crucial role into the evolution of working conditions were the improvements in security matters- especially in constructions and hazardous positions, the increase of participation of women in labor markets, the decline of working hours by 20 or even 30 hours per week, the rise of wages and other benefits etc. The establishment and the massive participation of workers in labor unions also played a stellar role in the improvement of the rights of workers and the regulations which protected both workers and organizations.

According to **Connelly and Gallagher (2004)**<sup>1</sup>, the vast majority of workers at that time were employed by “standard” or “normal” work arrangements, which had the following characteristics:

1. workers had full time (traditional) jobs, with usual work shifts 09:00-17:00
2. their contracts had indefinite duration
3. they were working at employers’ “place” of business, under the employer’s supervision

This generation of workers belongs to the “silent Generation”, also known as “Traditionalists”. This generation consisted of people who were born between 1925 and 1945 and were parents of Baby Boomers. (**Beaman, 2008**)<sup>2</sup>. As professionals, traditionalists were loyal and dedicated to their employers and they usually remained to the same employers throughout their entire career. From the other hand employers offered workers job security and crucial benefits, such as good pension, health insurance programs and high wages. (**Howe, 2014**)<sup>3</sup>

The last twenty years were characterized by major modifications in the business environment of organizations which also led to significant changes in the area of work conditions. Contingent work arrangements, a trend that was developed in 1980’s and has its origins in the USA, were “gaining ground” as a commonly used practice in organizations all over the world.

## 2.2 What is “contingent workforce”?

Contingent work is not a trend of the current Millennium· the term “contingent work” was coined by the labor economist Audrey Freedman in 1985. Freedman, as a speaker at a conference of employment security, described contingent work as “a flexible management technique of employing workers that could help American organizations to improve their competitiveness”. According to Freedman, organizations had the ability to employ workers only when there was an immediate demand for their services, without having the obligation to maintain them permanently. **(Polivka, 1996a)**<sup>4</sup>

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistic (BLS) conducted in 1989 a generally accepted definition of contingent worker, based on which “contingent workers are people who do not expect their jobs to last or who are reported that their jobs are temporary”. They are people who do not have an implicit or explicit contract on ongoing employment. People who do not expect continue working due to personal reasons, such as retirement or returning to school, are not considered contingent workers. **(BLS, 2018)**<sup>5</sup>

The key factor to determine whether one job is contingent or not depends on two factors: the temporary nature of the job (objective) and the perception of workers about the time that they expect to hold the job (subjective). The BLS developed three estimates of contingent work, based on differing assumptions about the degree of attachment and job security workers have to their jobs in order to measure the size of contingent workforce.

- Estimate 1

This category is the narrowest and consists only of wage και salary workers. The workers of this category work at their current jobs for one year or less and they do not expect that they will continue at their current job for another year or more. Self-employed and independent contractors are not included. As far as agency workers and contract firm workers is concerned, the duration of their work and the expectations on continuity are based on the firm that employs them (staffing firm- direct employer)

- Estimate 2

The only difference between estimate 1 and estimate 2 is that this category consists of all workers (wage and salary workers) including self-employed and independent contractors. The parts referred to the duration of their work and expectations of the future remain the

same as the previous categories. As far as agency workers and contract firm workers is concerned, duration and expectations are based on the organization they are assigned (organization-indirect employer).

- Estimate 3

There is a distinction between different categories of workers in this estimate, which is considered being the broader, compared with the previous two mentioned above.

- In this category belong wage and salary workers who do not expect their job to last (even if they have held their current job for more than 1 year and expect to continue at their job for longer than 1 year)
- Self-employed workers and independent contractors who have been self-employed for 1 year or less and do not expect to be self-employed for another year or more

## 2.3 Categories of contingent workers

Based on the given definition, the term “contingent worker” or “independent worker” consists of a wide range of employment practices and worker categories. These workers are not the “typical” traditional employees who work 40 hours/week on a permanent basis and usually they do not have an exclusive contract with the organizations they work for. Some categories of workers do not belong to the payroll system of the organizations they work for and most of the times they do not have access to the various benefits programs, which organizations provide their permanent employees.

According to **Beaman (2008)<sup>2</sup>**, there are seven types of contingent workers that exist in organizations:

- Temporary workers

These workers are engaged for a specific period of time and may be paid on a salaried or hourly basis. They could also sign fixed-term, project/task-based contracts or accept seasonal work arrangements. As far as fixed term, project and task based contracts is concerned, employers and workers agree on a limited duration contract or on a pre-specified event, the arrival of which leads to the end of working relationship (**International Labor Organization, n.d)<sup>6</sup>**



- Part-time workers

In this category, which is one of the most common forms of non-traditional work arrangements belong workers whose normal hours of work are fewer than those of full-time workers, the traditional 35-40 hour work week. There are three categories of part-time workers: i) substantial part-time workers, who work 21-34 hours/week, ii) short part time workers, who work 20 hours or less per week and iii) marginal part-time workers, who work fewer than 15 hours per week. (**International Labor Organization, n.d**)<sup>7</sup>

- Interns

This form of non-traditional employment has become the most common way of transition from school period to work. Interns receive on-the-job training for a specified time period that lasts usually between a few weeks to a year which offers them a good opportunity to gain work experience, skills and sign professional contacts.

According to an International Labor Organization working dissertation (**O'Higgins, and Pinedo, 2018**)<sup>8</sup>, there are three categories of internship: i) internships which are linked to a specific course of academic study and provide college students credits, ii) internships which are part of Active Labour Market Programs. ALMP main aim is the improvement of employment opportunities for jobseekers in order to help them find a steady job that offers them constant payment. That also leads to the reduction of unemployment rates and the increase of earnings capacity. (**European Commission, 2017**)<sup>9</sup> and iii) open market internship which offers work experience that does not belong to the previous categories of internships.

- Consultants

Consultants are workers “hired” for their knowledge and experience in specialized business areas. External consultants, who are frequently part of a consulting firm and are generally paid on an hourly or daily basis, are usually hired for longer periods in order to be involved in strategic projects. This category of professionals gives employers the ability to overcome the lack of talent and expertise they face in some business areas. Employers have now access to specialized and high-skilled professionals and they have the ability to cope with them financially. (**Wikipedia, 2021**)<sup>10</sup>

- Independent contractors / freelancers

Independent contractors are workers hired in order to complete specific, well-defined tasks. They often work as sole proprietors and are paid on an hourly or daily basis. The major difference between independent contractors and the other categories of contingent workers is that these professionals must pay their taxes. The organization has the right to control or direct only the result of their work and not the process and methods used by the freelancer in order to complete its job. (IRS,2020)<sup>11</sup>

- outsourced workers

These workers are paid and managed by a third-party (staffing firm) that charges the organization based on a commercial contract for the workers' services, either on a per person or per transaction/activity basis. Workers are not directly employed by the organization to which they provide their services; their employment falls under contractual arrangements involving multiple parties (organization-staffing firm-workers), creating a multi-party employment relationship (**International Labor Organization, n.d**)<sup>12</sup>. Organization pays a fee to the staffing firm and the staffing firm pays workers their wages and the agreed benefits.

- offshore workers

The term "offshoring" refers to the exporting jobs from developed countries, such as USA and UK to less developed countries, such as India and Brazil. Offshore workers are actually outsourced workers who are situated in a location outside the organization's offices and main basis, generally in another country with lower cost of labor. The main reason for the organizations to choose this category of workers is to reduce labor cost, because the wages in the host country are significantly lower compared to those to mother country. Another reason is the availability of high skilled workers, such as engineers, in the less developed countries. Offshoring was evolved from low skilled workers to high skilled professionals in manufacturing sector, call centers, software development etc (Gerhart et al., 2012)<sup>13</sup>

- Teleworkers

According to the 2002 definition given by the European social partners framework agreement on telework, telework is defining for the first time as a form of organizing and/or

performing work using information technology, in the context of an employment contract or relationship, where work, which could also be performed at the employers premises, is carried out away from those premises on a regular basis **(Business Europe, 2002)<sup>14</sup>**. ILO, in its technical note of 5<sup>th</sup> June 2020, defines telework as the work which is “fully or partly carried out at an alternative location other than the default place of work”. An essential part of telework is the use of workers’ personal electronic devices such as a computer, tablet or telephone in order for them to perform their work.**(ILO, 2020)<sup>15</sup>**

For organizations, telework increases productivity, attracts and retains younger employees, reduces operating costs, reduces emergency absences etc. For employees, telework improves work-life balance and increases economic benefits, mainly through minimizing commute. **(SEV,2019)<sup>16</sup>**

Telework also increases employment opportunities for social groups, such as people with disabilities or young mothers but also for professionals who live in remote regions. Telework also benefits the environment through the reduction of traffic and the corresponding energy savings.

A joint ILO and Eurofound report **(2017)<sup>17</sup>** defines three (3) different categories of teleworkers, based on their place of work and the frequency they use information and communications technologies for their work outside the employers’ premises:

- i) Regular home-based telework: professionals who work mainly on a regular basis from their home
- ii) High mobile Telework - information and communications technologies (T/ICTM): professionals who work frequently in various places outside employer’s premises
- iii) Occasional T/ICTM or occasional telework: professionals who work occasionally either from their home or from other locations or both, with a low level of mobility

The alternative workforce continues to grow and represents nowadays more than one third of the total global workforce. Based on this massive growth, this specific group of workers has become a significant trend and even more categories of independent

workers have been developed. Based on a recent SHRM analysis, the following types of workers could be also stated (**Bersin, 2019**)<sup>18</sup>:

- Day Laborer

Day labor is a way of temporary casual employment. In casual employment workers are engaged for a specific period of time or number of hours and as return they receive a daily salary based on their agreement with the employer. These workers are paid to perform a specific task/ job for a single day. Usually are low-income workers who are not able to find a more stable work and seek for everyday tasks, such as painting a house or working in construction as long as this specific job lasts. Day labor is only allowed in some sectors in order to protect workers from excess misuse of this category of employment and providing them more than the minimum hourly wage. (**ILO, 2016**)<sup>19</sup>

- Diversified workers

These workers earn their income from different sources and employers, usually combining a traditional work with a freelance work or project. (**Tapia, 2017**)<sup>20</sup>

- Freelance Business Owner

This category includes business owners who have employees but still refer to themselves as freelancers. They are usually past freelancers, who decide to start their own business. Sometimes they hire a group of other independent workers who operate under a small business model. (**Tapia, 2017**)<sup>20</sup>

- Freelance Retiree

They are retirees who used to work as high- skilled professionals. These retirees work mainly as consultants by taking advantage of their previous experience and special skills. They work on specialized projects, usually for a short –term period.

- Moonlighter

This category refers to employees who have a second job, usually a part- time job, outside their primary work (usually a fully time- traditional job). They practice the “moonlight” job outside normal business hours principally for gaining more income but also for gaining experience and updating their skills. (**Tapia, 2017**)<sup>20</sup>

- On- call workers

These workers belong to the category of the part time employment. Basically they work on an ‘as-needed’ basis, when their employers “call” them. They face difficulties that arise from the nature of their work, mainly because of the unpredictable and insufficient hours and low earnings. (ILO, nd)<sup>21</sup>

- Crowd workers

This category of workers is reached through online platforms. In these platforms both organizations and professionals can reach each other either by providing specific services (professionals) or by searching professional in order to participate in specific projects (organizations). (Eurofound, 2020)<sup>22</sup>

Usually these workers compete in order to participate in one specific project and usually are paid only if they are among the top participants in the competition (Bersin et al, 2019)<sup>23</sup>

## 2.4. Growth of contingent workforce

In order to understand the reason for the growing preference to nontraditional work arrangements it is necessary to investigate this “trend” from the aspect of the organizations and the aspect of workers.

- **Organizations**

The previous decade was characterized by major rearrangements in global economy. Many countries, especially in Europe, suffered from a deep economic crisis followed by a deep recession, which led to changes in infrastructure and strategic plans of organizations. Organizations understood that in order to respond effectively and dynamically to the new challenges caused by these major changes they had to develop agility, both workforce and organizational.

As far as workforce agility is concerned, it is actually the ability of the organization to match workforce fluctuation to demand and to operate with the optimal workforce. On the other hand, organizational agility is the ability of the organization to anticipate and address the forces affecting the organization. There is a positive correlation between workforce

agility and organizational agility, because organizations must take into account, when managing organizational agility, that it would be affected by the changing needs and the diversity and the mix of workforce population. (CIPD, 2014)<sup>24</sup>

Accordingly, these orientation changes affected, among others, the workforce mix of modern organizations. A large number of organizations worldwide increased the use of alternative work arrangements, either by employing different categories of contingent workforce or by decreasing the proportion of their current permanent employees through modification of their contracts, sometimes without their permission and agreement (involuntary).

At the beginning organizations chose contingent workers in order to cover an immediate change and sudden fluctuations of demand: it thought to be- and actually was- an easier and cheaper solution for them to cover sudden needs, absences from healthy reasons or vacations instead of hiring permanent fulltime workers. Organizations just wanted to cover gaps and did not consider alternative professionals as a long-term solution.

Nowadays, the contemporary approach shows that alternative work arrangements have become a competitive advantage, a strategic tool in the quiver of organizations, allowing them to effectively respond to changes of business world. Through flexible work arrangements organizations from one hand obtain the necessary agility to compete in turbulent environments and on the other hand gain access to high talented and skilled professionals, whom could not “afford” financially otherwise.

As mentioned before, the acceptance of contingent workforce arrangements is growing, with the percentage of the organizations preferring not traditional professionals ever increasing. Based on the 2019 Ardent Survey, 41% of participating organizations stated that they use nontraditional workers in order to deal with economic/financial, demographic and technological changes (Dwyer, 2019)<sup>25</sup>. This percentage will continue to grow, especially this period of time when global organizations have to deal with the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.

#### **a) Financial issues**

As far as the economic/financial part is concerned, the global financial crisis of previous years led to a growing insecurity and uncertainty causing, among other modifications in organizations’ functions and the reexamination of their workforce strategy. The economy

was in recovery mode for a long time, so organizations tried at first to control and minimize their operational costs and improve their cost efficiency.

Organizations started to search for viable ways to reduce costs, by putting great emphasis at first to those areas, whose expenses participated the most to their financial statements. Payroll expenses represent one of the largest expenses of organizations, followed by health care expenses, pension expenses and other benefits provided from organizations to their employees. One way to reduce payroll expenses was by dropping the proportion of their permanent employees either by lay-offs or by temporary suspensions of contracts. Managers realized that this specific solution could cause problems to organization's productivity and function because of that shortage of the available workforce. The other possible solution that managers could chose in order to accomplish this policy was by changing the composition of their workforce through contingent workforce arrangements, either by modifying the contracts of current employees or by employing nontraditional professionals.

Alternative work arrangements improve organizations' financial agility by giving the ability to organizations to fill with nontraditional professionals short-tem roles in order to cover fluctuations in demand caused by market and economic changes. Organizations are able to employ contingent workers only for a specific project or period of time, without having the obligation to employ them permanently. That leads not only to the reduction of the direct labor cost (most categories of contingent workers do not participate in the payroll system of the organizations) but also other fixed costs are avoided, such as participation in health care, insurance and benefits programs and severance requirements. Overall with these arrangements organizations achieve increased cost savings.

Another financial benefit for the organization comes from the special nature of contingent work as well. Some categories of contingent workers, such as freelancers, work from their space and use their own equipment. In that case, organizations have the opportunity to reduce their fixed costs by downsizing their physical office space (extremely useful in expensive real estate markets) and equipment. They could also rent this unused office space to other contingent workers for a short period. In those cases, organizations are favored by the rent and individuals gain access to resources and improve their social life (**Cantrell et al., 2015**)<sup>26</sup>

### **b) Demographics**

Another issue organizations have to struggle is caused by the demographic problem that occurs in many countries and affects them significantly. Data show that the birth rate in many countries is below the replacement level. According to World Bank (2020)<sup>27</sup> and based on data of 2018, the fertility rate in European Union was 1,55, in the USA 1,7 and in Greece 1,35 (the fertility rate represents the number of children that would be born to a woman). Because of the declining birth rates, the number of younger employees entering the labor market will continue to lessen and the average age of employees will continue increase. So, even more employees will leave the market as retirees, causing a reduction of the size of the available “labor pool” and creating a labor gap and a deficit in experience and high skilled professionals. According to the 2019 Deloitte survey, 45% of the employers who participated in the survey mentioned that they face difficulties in filling open positions and dealing with the labor gap. (Bersin et al, 2019)<sup>23</sup>. Organizations are struggling to find qualified candidates and they choose contingent workers, mostly freelancers, consultants and freelancer retirees, in order to fill those skill gaps caused by lack of skills and experience of their permanent employees.

### **c) Technology**

Technologic advancements offer new opportunities and capabilities to both organizations and workers. Organizations have the ability to reach professionals through online platforms. In those platforms organizations have the ability to search for appropriate candidates, based on their needs, inside a large pool of available potential workforce. In some categories of contingent workers, their physical presence in organizations’ spaces is not necessary· they are able to work from their space, using their own equipment, offering organizations the ability to downsize their equipment. Technology also allows organizations to develop management practices, such as performance reviews, feedback and training programs, taking into account the specific nature of contingent workforce. Improvements in technology allowed the development of organizations’ infrastructure, which was essential for the evolution of telework

### **d) Talent**

According to the 2018 annual Manpower survey, 45% of the organizations struggle to fill open jobs and this percentage ascends to 67% when it comes to large organizations. The



participants stated that the main reason for that situation is the lack of candidates, followed by the lack of experience and lack of skills. This survey presents one of the biggest problems organizations have to deal with, skill shortages. From one hand there are college graduates and entry – level professionals, who lack experience and soft skills (skills in complex thinking, collaboration, team work and communication) and from the other hand there are senior professionals with experience and soft skills that are close to retirement. The leaving of the latter creates a talent gap, which organizations have to overcome. **(Bersin et al, 2019)<sup>23</sup>**

Using nontraditional professionals allows organizations to employ workforce with the right mix of technical and soft skills by finding skills and types of workers who are not available through the traditional ways. Through these arrangements organizations have the ability to put the right professional into the right place at the time and place it is needed and create an agile and intelligent workforce that could deal with pressures and challenges.

The increasing use of contingent workers constitutes a reality of our present and our future. It is estimated that in the following years, 40% of total workforce will consists of contingent workers, who would play a critical role in organizations' evolution **(Dwyer, 2017)<sup>28</sup>**.

Based on the annual Ardent survey in 2020, contingent workforce constitutes “the major talent innovation of the millennium”, being an important part of the global economy. This agile workforce is considering becoming the most valuable asset of modern organizations. The depth of talent and expertise possessed by those professionals optimize the effectiveness of work during troubling periods. **(Dwyer, 2020)<sup>29</sup>**.

Organizations have to deal with shifts in the economy and shortages in talent· the extent, in which the organizations will adopt and use strategically these professionals, could create a competitive advantage for them and a way of differentiation between organizations.

- **Professionals**

At this point, workforce population consists of five generations: i) Silent Generation, ii) Baby Boomers, iii) Generation X, iv) Generation Y (Millennials) and v) Generation Z. **(Link, n.d)<sup>30</sup>**

i) Silent Generation (1925-1946)

They represent the 2% of the total workforce and this percentage is declining. As professionals, they respect authority and follow the rules. As communication style, they prefer in-person interaction but even though they are the least experienced, compared to the other generations, in terms of technology they communicate best formally. These are high-experienced professionals who are close to retirement. (Moss, 2017)<sup>31</sup>

ii) Baby Boomers (1947-1964)

The 15% of total workforce consists of professionals between the ages 55 to 73, but this percentage is also declining. They are “workaholics” and they try to find ways to work after their retirement. (Moss, 2017)<sup>31</sup>

iii) Generation X (1965-1979)

They represent the 33% of the total workforce but in a declining matter. According to Bova and Kroth (2001)<sup>32</sup>, the main motivators for Gen Xs are money (in terms of salary, bonuses, and other benefits, such as pension programs and health care) and continue learning. It is very important for them to work in organizations which encourage knowledge and develop training programs

iv) Generation Y (Millennials) (1980-1997)

Millennials (or Gen Y) constitute the majority of the workforce in many countries worldwide (nearly 40% of total workforce), with the perspective that their power will increase the following years. It is actually the last generation to be born entirely in the previous century. This generation was raised in the Information Age, and they are comfortable in using digital technologies and social media (Wikipedia, 2021)<sup>33</sup>. They seek to work in a friendly, flexible and social work environment and prefer direct communication

v) Generation Z (1998-2016)

It is the newest generation that enters the workforce. Even though their participation in the workforce is estimated to be around 10%, this percentage is constant growing. This “high-tech” generation communicates best by emails through their smart phones. The majority of Gen Z workers are students who work in entry-level jobs, have no experience and are more likely to choose alternative work arrangements. (Moss, 2017)<sup>31</sup>

As far as employees who belong to Silent Gen, Gen X and Baby Boomers is concerned, they are high-skilled and experienced professionals who approach retirement or are already retirees. Their leaving creates a gap of work ethic and special skills in the organizations· the younger generations have not developed these skills yet and have not gained the necessary work experience in order to take over strategic projects. For these reasons there is an increased demand for this pool of high skilled professionals, to whom organizations offer work as consultants in difficult and strategic projects. On the other hand, these retirees seek to return to work, not only for gaining money but also for the stimulation of being productive and useful again.

A typical example of how important is the experience of retirees for the organization is the German company Robert Bosch GmbH. **(Bersin et al, 2019)<sup>23</sup>**. This organization has developed a pool of contingent workers that consists of 1700 former and retired employees worldwide. Bosch has even created a subsidiary – Bosch Management Support GmbH- in order to manage effectively these workers. These professionals are used as senior consultants on multiple important projects and functions, from R&D to sales and marketing functions.

As far as Millennials is concerned, they have a different philosophy and culture compared with previous generations. They belong to the generation which was raised in the digital age and are confident in using modern tools and innovations. **(Dwyer, 2017)<sup>28</sup>**. They believe that organizational success should be measured in terms of something more than profitability. For them the way the organizations they work for deal with issues such as protection of environment, equality between men and women, income inequalities etc is crucial and that is the reason why they seek to work in “social-conscious” organizations. They also believe that their parents lived a better life compared with the one that they will live. **(Agarwal et al, 2018)<sup>34</sup>**

The categories of professionals mentioned above shape some categories of contingent workers.

As far as their working habits are concerned, they desire is to become their own bosses. They are interested in creating a “portfolio career”, so instead of following a “typical” career with upward moves in the same organization, they prefer to hold multiple jobs in different

organizations and sectors crossing their career. This movement offers them more flexibility and autonomy in the development of their careers. (**Broekhuizen, 2017**)<sup>35</sup>.

Millennials also seek for more flexible working conditions, which allow them to balance their personal life with their working life by adapting their hours of work to their personal needs. The size of the labor market is affected by the steady increase in fathers, who choose to work with flexible work arrangements in order to stay at home and take care of their children or professionals who want to look after their aging parents. The categories of employees mentioned above are more likely to choose alternative work arrangements in order to balance their lives.

One key factor in order to understand the mentality of Millennials and their perspective in terms of working habits is the accomplishment of work-life balance. Work/life balance is a state of equilibrium in which the demands of both a person's job and personal life are equal (**World Spy, 2012**)<sup>36</sup>. It was coined in 1986 but the latest years have attracted more attention in the workplace due to the increase of womens' employment rates. That situation created "balance" problems, especially in couples with children with dual earnings (dual career families). In these cases, couples struggle to keep a line between life and work, in order to combine family responsibilities and pressures of work. (**Crompton end Lyonette, 2005**)<sup>37</sup> Millennials prefer to have quality time with their family more than establishing a "traditional" career. These new flexible working conditions that arise from flexible working arrangements allow them to work at the way and time they want.

According to the 2021 annual Deloitte Survey, the concept of "well being" seems to replace the term "work / life balance". "Well being" is becoming one of the top three priorities which are set by employees, regarding the work transformations they seek to happen into their organizations, and could increase their engagement to the organization and satisfaction for working into a much healthier environment (**Eaton et al, 2020**)<sup>38</sup>. Based on the American Psychological Association (APA) (2020)<sup>39</sup>, "well-being" is defined as "a state of happiness and contentment, with low levels of distress, overall good physical and mental health and outlook, or good quality of life".

One difference that is observed between the two concepts (work/life balance and well being) is that as far as the "well-being" term is concerned the practices and functions organizations will establish in order to promote well-being are more important than the desire of the

professionals. In particular, even if the 80% of the participants (managers) in Deloitte's survey consider it important or very important to develop policies that promote well-being for the overall success of the organization, implementation of those policies in practice is another issue.

One strategic goal organizations should aim to achieve is developing ways to maintain the physical and mental health of their employees in order to increase their social (e.g. effective communications), mental (e.g. increase confidence) and emotional skills (e.g. self control) of their employees. Organizations could develop programs for emergency medical leave, programs that support childcare and eldercare – extremely important matters for Millennials, programs that ensure physical, mental, and financial health etc. One way for the organizations to achieve this goal is by promoting alternative work arrangements.

According to Deloitte, 70% of executives who participated in the annual survey stated that the shift into alternative work arrangements promotes well-being through the development of new digital collaboration platforms, the ability of professionals to determine how work should be done, providing home access to professionals to organizations' platforms etc. In this point it is very important to be mentioned the crucial role and assistance of the IT department in the whole process. IT department, with the close cooperation with the HR department, is responsible for the designing and development of those technologies and processes that will ensure the promotion of workers-well-being. **(Eaton et al, 2020)<sup>38</sup>**

Finally, according to the World Health Organization, the development of well being programs minimize workers' exposure to work-related physical & psychosocial risks (work-related stress that could cause chronic diseases such as hypertension or adoption not healthy personal practices such as smoking, drinking), promote healthy behaviors (work -related and lifestyle-related) among workers, reduces medical costs, absenteeism costs, job dissatisfaction and lack of work engagement. **(Rokho, 2012)<sup>40</sup>**

## **2.5 Benefits and risks of contingent work**

Employing contingent workforce on the one hand offers organizations a plethora of benefits, such as agility (workforce and organizational), easy access to talent and specialized skills, and reduced operational costs but on the other hand creates unique challenges that organizations have to deal with. **(Oracle, 2010)<sup>41</sup>**

Some of the most common benefits and risks for the organizations which decide to employ contingent professionals follow are mentioned below:

- Benefits of employing contingent workforce
  1. Contingent workers have already many of the skills and experience required for the given job so they could be more efficient, compared with individuals who have no previous experience and are completely new to the job or industry
  2. Because of their previous experience, the costs associated with recruiting and training are lower compared to the costs for new employees
  3. Contingent workers consist of a source of external knowledge for the organizations. Both permanent employees and contingent workers could benefit through this interaction and improve their capabilities and knowledge.
  4. Contingent workers increase organizations' agility. Organizations choose on real time the type of the professional they need on a given project or for a specific period of time. Organizations could develop this strategy and create a competitive advantage, while their competitors struggle from talent shortages
  5. The existence of contingent workforce management programs improves the organization's business value. That increases the organization's ability to attract, retain, and motivate high-skilled professionals who may not work in a full-time position in different circumstances
  6. The retirement of Silent Generation, Generation X and Baby Boomers could create talent shortages. Contingent workers give organizations the opportunity to react on time and cover the skill gaps when they occur.
  7. Contingent workers do not usually participate in organizations' benefits programs, e.g. insurance programs, which leads to a decrease in fixed costs.
  8. The use of contingent workers reduces costs from employment and payroll taxes. These professionals do not participate in the payroll system of the organizations and for some categories, such as freelancers, workers are responsible for the payment of their taxes. Using agency workers, all the above are transferred to the staffing firm.

- Risks of employing contingent workforce
  1. The risk of misuse of workers could lead to legal, financial and reputational risks. Every type of workers belongs to a different category in terms of tax behavior or participation in organization's benefits programs. Worker misclassification could lead to non compliance with payroll taxes and other labor taxes, causing legal problems and financial penalties. Workers may not be able to participate in health insurance and pension programs, even though they deserve to or they may not be able to take advantage of unemployment insurance benefits.
  2. There is also the risk of inadequate fulfillment of the given work or project (either exceeding time or incomplete fulfillment), either from the staffing firm or the individual professional
  3. Even though one of the benefits of employing contingent workers is the knowledge that they bring to the organization, sometimes they are not willing to share their knowledge, especially when they are disappointed with the type of their contract and the behavior of the managers
  4. Dealing with the possibility and the risk of co-employment, especially in cases where organization recruits through online platforms or directly. Organization has to ensure that its workers do not work in similar organizations, situation which could lead to legal conflicts.
  5. Possibility of conflicts between contingent workers and permanent employees, especially in cases when the latter believe that the "new" ones are working in more challenging projects or in better working conditions.

### **3. Human Resource Management and Contingent Workforce**

The economic, demographic and technological changes the last twenty years created a new business environment for the organizations worldwide. As a result of these changes, the percentage of flexible working arrangements increased, causing strategic instability within the organizations.

The rapidly increase of nontraditional working arrangements in various functions and projects of the organization creates a challenging environment for HR professionals. Human Resource Department need adjust to the new reality and modify organization's human resource strategy in order to include contingent workers in the most efficient way. HR professionals must move from the traditional policies of HRM and develop effective ways to manage this multy-contractual mix of workforce in order to achieve improvement of productivity, reduction of cost and overall an increase of business value. (Beaman,2008)<sup>2</sup>

#### **3.1 HR and relations with the other departments**

- **Procurement**

Even though the percentage of contingent workers in the organization is rising, the involvement of HR in the stages of the whole process is limited. For many years responsible for the "contingent project" was the procurement department cooperated by the financial department. A lot of effort has been made from other departments, such as HR and IT, to get involved to the whole process and maximize the total payoff for the organization.

The previous status of managing contingent workers could cause conflicts because of the different orientation of the departments involved. From the one hand procurement and finance department are interested in optimizing total spend. According to Wikipedia (2020)<sup>41</sup>, Procurement is the process of finding, agreeing to terms, and acquiring goods, services, or works from an external source, often via a tendering or competitive bidding process. The procurement department is able to increase profit and reduce costs for the organization by selecting the appropriate supplier to purchase services or products. They see workers as contractual assets and are interested in which way the workers, with their skills, knowledge and experience, could help the organization by accomplishing a specific task or project on a given cost/price. On the other hand human resource department is mainly



focused on the quality of hire and it is more interested in the workers as an entity, their character and talent. (Oracle, 2010)<sup>41</sup>

Another risk the organization would face lies from the fact that for those employees were not followed the usual forms of assessments, which HR uses for the selection of full time employees (Agarwal et al, 2018)<sup>34</sup> So, it is possible that procurement department would employ workers based on their wage, who the HR department would not employ if the typical selection process had been followed. That could lead to strategic and “compliance” problems, especially to those organization where contingent workers constitute a large proportion of their employees.

The cooperation between procurement and HR is vital for the organization but it should be decided the extent to which the procurement has to be involved in sourcing and managing contingent workers. From the one hand procurement has experience in dealing with vendors and on the other hand managing employees is a HR responsibility. Managing contingent workers is a difficult exercise· both procurement and HR must work together in order to develop a total contingent workforce management strategy. In this strategy, both departments have to use their own competencies· procurement must bring the experience it owns for achieving cost savings by managing relationships with vendors and agencies and HR must bring the ability to measure the quality of work of employees and manage the relationships within the organization.

From their point of view, procurement professionals agree that is crucial for the organization the collaboration between those two departments but they state that there are “gaps in HR’s capability” when it comes to sourcing and managing contingent workers. Speakers on the panel “How procurement and HR can propel their organization towards total workforce management’ of the 2019 ProcureCon HR pointed out that even though they recognize that the HR department is responsible for managing employees, they believe that HR professionals face problems in management and coordination of contingent workers because of the complex nature of their work conditions.

Many “procurement specialists” warned that HR professionals need training in order to develop skills to manage nontraditional professionals. They also pointed out that many HR professionals prefer to deal with operational tasks rather than strategic tasks. Choosing contingent workforce in an organization is a strategic decision and needs commitment from

the whole entity. Effective contingent workforce programs need also the acceptance of C-Suite, who forms the conditions whether the organization needs to hire permanent workforce or contingent. Another idea that came across this panel was the idea of creating a separate, independent department for dealing only with contingent workers, which won't report to either procurement or HR. (Sharp, 2019)<sup>43</sup>

- **IT**

Another department, which should cooperate tight with the HR department, is IT. The IT department is responsible for managing organization's software, hardware, communications systems, intranet and extranet systems and various databases. (Daft, 2010)<sup>44</sup>. Main aim for IT specialists is to try to solve complex organizational problems through technology. IT should work closely with HR in order to develop an appropriate IT infrastructure so that HR could manage and support effectively the organization's workforce. The previous years organizations had to deal with a lack of software tools that could help HR professionals manage nontraditional workers. The existing systems did not facilitate employers to communicate effectively with workers, to select data in order to evaluate their performance, to support and guide them when needed. IT department had to build its own tools and apps in order to help HR.

IT department is also responsible to ensure issues about the security of communication systems, since some categories of professionals, such as consultants, deal with trade secrets, with projects that require data privacy, and in general with issues that are confidential and important for the existence of organizations. The last years several vendors have developed software programs in order to facilitate organizations to manage their workforce. Those outsourced solutions have lower cost, compared with the costs of software programs' development from IT department and for that reason are chosen from many organizations.

- **Legal Department**

HR department should also cooperate closely with Legal Department. The Legal Department is responsible for managing all legal activities of the organization. (Kolvenbach, 1979)<sup>45</sup> It evaluates the legal structure of the organization, consults managers and informs them for legal consequences of their actions. As far as HR department is concerned, legal department informs HR professionals about labor legislation and prepares the contracts.

Even though flexible work arrangements gain ground within the organizations, the Labor law for some categories remains complex. The increasing use of contingent workforce can expose companies to various risks, including financial, criminal and reputational risk. Legal department has to ensure that through the contracts, which contingent workers sign, organization's trade secrets and confidential information remain safe. According to the 2018 annual Deloitte survey, 42% of the respondents worry about the confidential risk because of the increasing use of contractors and a 39% worries about the changing government regulation in managing nontraditional workers. (Agarwal et al, 2018)<sup>34</sup>. Every category of professionals falls into a different regulatory environment. It is very important to engage workers with the right category of the labor law they belong. All employees must be correctly and legally protected, regardless the type of their contract. Misunderstandings, intentionally or not, could cause reputational risk and damage organization's name.

It is common for organizations to seek workers through staffing firms or leasing agencies. These workers are named agency workers and form a large proportion in total contingent workforce. In this case, the organization is not involved with employee protection legislation or protection laws against dismissal· the agency firm is responsible for those matters. However, the organization has to check the agency firm for inconsistencies that could harm the name of the organization and could cause financial risk. Such inconsistencies could be the illegal leasing of the employee and criminal offence of subcontracting of employees (Subcontracting is a business practice, where a main or principal contractor of an investor or client hires additional individuals or companies called subcontractors to help complete a project ) (Heinen et al, 2017)<sup>46</sup>. The Legal Department should participate in the negotiations with the agency firm, assisting the procurement department, and form jointly a contract not only in terms of spends optimizations but also for organization's security. (Kolvenbach, 1979)<sup>45</sup>

### **3.2 Developing a contingent workforce strategy**

HR department's main responsibility is management and protection of employees, who are the intangible and most vulnerable asset of the organization. As mentioned previously, organizations started to use contingent workers, usually low skilled constructor workers in order to cover gaps in their employees caused mainly by seasonality or absence.

Nowadays the situation is different· modern organizations use contingent workforce strategically. They participate in organizational goals, many of them cover crucial positions, becoming a tool for the organizations to improve their agility and competitiveness. This situation requires radical changes in the way the HR department operates. The role of HR department is very important for the success of this project· the department is responsible to discover the appropriate policies to recruit and manage this “new” workforce, by developing an up-to-date Contingent workforce program.

One major responsibility for HR professionals is to decide which is going to be the right mix of employees that could contribute to the success of the organization. The next step for them is to find it and select it. This mix could be represented by a combination of traditional full time workers and professionals who belong in various categories of contingent workers, such as consultants and freelancers, former employees-now retirees, agency workers, interns, individuals through online platforms etc

This process is extremely challenging because every category of those professionals has different characteristics, different motivation and they need customized handling and management. (Dwyer, 2019)<sup>28</sup>

### **i) Job analysis**

The first stage of this strategy begins with the detail description of the position to be occupied (job analysis). With the term “job analysis” we define the systematic set of methods that the HR Professionals use in order to identify and determine in detail the job duties and requirements for a given job. Job analysis contains two key elements:

- a) Identification of Major Job Requirements (MJR’s), which are the most important duties and responsibilities of the position to be filled and
- b) Identification of Knowledge, Skills and Abilities, containing the typical characteristics of a candidate in order to be considered as the best qualified for the given job. Typically, the characteristics that are evaluated are experience, education and training. (Mihiotis, 2005)<sup>47</sup>

The existence of a well defined internal system, where the skills of the current employees of the organizations are recorded, as well as their expectation about their future and their development in the organization, is very important. The existence of that system facilitates the complexity of the HR department’s work, because being able to have immediate access

to a well established system, HR professionals could decide whether a current employee has the skills to cover an open job position instead of hiring a contingent worker, or not.

Once they reached the decision to cover the position with contingent workers, they have to decide about the type of the professional who is appropriate for the given job, through a large pool of workers with different characteristics. At this point, there has to be close cooperation with the Procurement, the Legal and the Finance departments, because the job description and the selection of the right professionals should be in accordance with the contract details, defined by both Procurement and Legal Departments and the budget defined by Finance Department.

## **ii) Recruiting**

As soon as the HR department decides the appropriate category of nontraditional worker for the given job, the next step for the organization is the development of a pool of qualified professionals. Recruitment refers to the process through which organizations seek candidates for covering potential work positions (**Gerhart et al., 2012**)<sup>13</sup>. There are different sources, where organizations could turn into in order to find the candidate that fits in the given position:

### **a) Staffing providers /leasing companies**

These firms, also known as temporary – help service firms” or “temporary staffing agencies” are a common source of providing contingent workforce to organizations. Many of them are well established companies with a universal presence, e.g. Manpower and Adecco. In this case, organizations deal with a three party relationship, where the organization (the client in this case), the service firm and the employee are connected with a fixed time assignment. (**Connelly and Gallagher, 2004**)<sup>1</sup>.

The cooperation begins when the organization inform the service firm about its needs for workers, based on their current and future projects or needs created by fluctuation of demand or strategic planning. The responsibility of the serving firm is to search into its data base and provide the organization with some appropriate candidates, to choose from them the appropriate. Once they find the workers, workers and staffing firm sign a contract· the contract is only between the service firm and the worker. So, from one hand the contingent workers work for the organization but from the other hand they actually “belong” to the service firm. Service firm is responsible for their compensation, annual leaves, labor taxes

etc. Organization pays, usually every month, the service firm the amount of the wage plus an agreed markup, usually 20%-30%.

Organizations which collaborate with staffing firms decrease their fixed costs, because firstly the new workers do not participate in the payroll system and secondly the organizations do not obliged to pay their labor taxes. It also helps organizations not only to decrease the time they spend in order to recruit and select workers but also disengage HR professionals from this time-consuming procedure and they set free to work in other more strategic projects. Based on the contract between organization and staffing firm, there would be also other advantages for the organization, such as the responsibility of the staffing firm to replace without extra costs the agency worker in case of vacation, illness or in general an form of absence. It is also possible that the terms of the contract between the staffing firm and the organization set out that the staffing team is also responsible for workers' training for the given job.

This solution has some risks for the organizations· the worker does not “belong” to the organization, situation that could increase reputation risk, in cases where workers' behavior is not in accordance with the official directions of the organization. There is also the possibility of undeclared work risk in case the agency firm has not a proper behavior to the worker, e.g. leaving them insecure or having problems and delays in compensation matters. That situation could affect the organization and create legal risks.

Organizations could face also co-employment risk because two parties (the organization and the staffing firm) share legal employer responsibilities of an employee. So, in case something bad happens, both firms are responsible. All the above risks could harm the brand name and the reputation of the organization. So organization should be extremely careful when choosing their partners.

#### b) Online talent platforms

On line talent platforms act as mediators between professionals and organizations. In this case, organizations and nontraditional workers- job seekers can connect on real- time. The software these platforms use enables the quick connection between employers and employees.

In these platforms professionals are able to sell their services to potential clients (organizations) and organizations are able to find and directly engage workers that meet

their standards. The assignments between workers and organizations could be hourly-paid, part-time, project based or fixed-contract assignments. Some commonly used platforms are Upwork, Catalant and JobandTalend. A lot of these platforms specialize in specific areas of business activity, such as Hired (Tech) and TalMix (consultants).

On line talent platform is a rapidly growing market based on the McKinsley Global Institute report in 2015, by 2025 these platforms could add \$2.7 trillion to global GDP. Workers could find jobs more quickly, the unemployment rate would decline and especially in countries like Greece and Spain, which face constant high unemployment, rates could benefit the most. On line platforms show also the trend on the demand of skills which seek the organizations. Younger people are able to find out which jobs are on demand at a given time and that gives them the opportunity to make better educational choices by making appropriate carrier choices and that could reduce structural unemployment as well. **(Dobbs et al, 2015)<sup>48</sup>**

#### c) Direct hire arrangements with individuals

This method is used more often in large organizations. Specific contractors, consultants or freelancers are chosen for critical projects, where special requirements are needed, that come from the experience, training/education and specialized knowledge of the professionals. Sometimes even managers in high levels are temporary replaced by highly skilled professionals. Some of these freelancers have previous experience in working in the specific organization and are key performers based on their previous evaluation. Other individuals are also formal employees of the organization who are now current retirees and have the knowledge and the skills to help organizations on specific tasks and projects, such as the example of Bosch's "pool" of retirees that was mentioned previously.

#### iii) Selection

Selection is the process by which an organization tries to identify candidates with the necessary knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics that are necessary for a given job position and are able to help the organization achieve its goals. **(Gerhart et al., 2012)<sup>13</sup>**

The final selection of the contingent workers is a task with more than one participant. As it was mentioned previously, procurement, legal, IT and HR department have to cooperate closely. After the selection of the candidate, Procurement (in case of selection through staffing firms), deals with the firm, in order to achieve the best possible agreement. Then



the legal department creates the contract, the procurement issues the purchase order and at the end the finance department settles with the contract. **(Oracle, 2010)**<sup>41</sup>

One common infringement of the procedure comes from some line managers or regional managers, who take the initiative, without having the appropriate knowledge and training to do it, and determine their needs in contingent workers. These managers complete the whole process by themselves and that usually leads to irrational choices that could cause waste of time and money for the organizations.

#### **iv) Training**

Training is a process through which employees are able to comprehend and learn the required job-related knowledge, skills and behavior for a given job position. **(Gerhart et al., 2012)**<sup>13</sup>

After the recruitment and selection of contingent workers, many organizations mistakenly believe that these professionals are already well trained and ready to start working on their tasks/projects, but in many cases that is not the reality. Contingent workers need support, guidance and the opportunity to learn the culture of the organization they work so that could increase their effectiveness and become committed to organizational goals. **(Agarwal et al, 2018)**<sup>34</sup>.

On boarding is the procedure, through which new employees take the necessary knowledge, skills, and behaviors in order to become effective organizational members.**(Wikipedia,2020)**<sup>49</sup> According to Cezanne HR 2019 survey, optimizing on boarding is going to become a point of competitive difference between organizations. Based on this survey, 60% of contingent workers at UK is not included in the on boarding process. **(Muller-Heydnyk,2019)**<sup>50</sup>. On boarding is crucial for organizations and could prevent reputational risk.

Unfortunately the majority of organizations do not give contingent workers access to their usual training programs and events. Some organizations are not legally allowed to include those professionals in training programs or provide them with full access to certain information **(Broekhuizen, 2017)**<sup>35</sup>. Other organizations, which use staffing providers, believe that training workers is staffing firm's responsibility. It is something that should be reported in the contract between organization and staffing firm. In case the staffing firm is responsible for workers' training, then it must develop the appropriate programs and train



workers during a given period of time. On their part, organizations must check the results of training, by testing workers in specific tasks.

The reality is that 55% of HR professionals who participated in the 2018 annual survey of Deloitte stated that organizations do not support training for this population of workers. That situation gives the impression that organizations see- and treat- contingent workers not as professionals with equal rights with the permanent employees, but as low-skilled workers.

The absence of training could also lead to health issues for workers, especially low-skilled workers in jobs with dangerous tasks. This lack of safety training and access in preventing measures could cause more injuries, illness even death because, especially in cases with workers who have less experience in working in dangerous workplaces, compared with traditional workers. If a staffing firm is involved, that could also cause confusion about the firm which is responsible for providing safety equipment and training. **(Kummings and Kreiss, 2008)<sup>51</sup>**

According to managers, the major barrier in the involvement of contingent workers in organizations' training programs is training expenditures and because of the worldwide economic recession, corporate training budgets were in low levels the previous years. And even though hiring nontraditional workers is a strategic choice for the organizations, developing systems for training these workers was not priority. But it seems that this situation is about to change. Executives understand that the more they look after the improvement of their nontraditional workers' skills, the better the benefit for the organization. Executives should take into account that training and upskilling contingent workers allow them to have access to the kind of talent organizations need in order to grow. It also creates a strong employer brand that could attract talented and high quality candidates. **(Illianes et al, 2018)<sup>52</sup>**

The type of training programs that should be developed depends on the special needs of each organization. In every case, a change in the traditional approach that HR professionals used to follow in terms of training needs and training programs is needed. The type of skills and the way of training contingent workers is different, compared to training programs for traditional workers. Organizations have now the opportunity to develop alternative methods of training that benefits not only contingent workers but traditional workers as well. They could take advantage of online training delivery platforms, which are companies that

support corporate learning, such as Valamis and Bray Leino Learning. The most appropriate and effective training method should be a combination of live-in person training (or live video training) and written materials.(CIPD, 2020)<sup>53</sup>.

Alternative forms of learning could be a strategic way to attract and develop highly skilled workers. These learning methods could be both formal (e.g. gamification) and informal (e.g. social collaborative learning). Gamification for example is the process of applying game design theories to everyday situations and scenarios, in order to make the learning process more attractive. In these everyday learning-based scenarios, employees either compete against other employees or participate individually. (**Training Industry, 2013**)<sup>54</sup> It makes training more interesting and funny and through this new learning trend, employees-learners are able to control their learning experiences. Organizations, like Deloitte and IBM, have already included gamification in their learning programs.

Social collaborative learning is an informal way of learning. Online collaboration tools enable transfer of knowledge between the members of the organization. Organizations could create a semi-formal structure, following the structure of social media, e.g. Facebook, where employees could share ideas, make comments, send instant messages etc. This training strategy encourages collaboration between employees and appeals to Millennials and Generation Z, the generations who love social media and constitute the future for the organizations.(CIPD, 2020)<sup>53</sup>

Organizations must treat contingent workers, as far as learning opportunities is concerned, with the same way they treat their traditional workers. Contingent workforce is a source of knowledge for the organization. Traditional employees have the opportunity to gain knowledge from workers who have highly specialized skills and experience. Surveys show that when contingent workers do not participate in training programs and events, the level of knowledge sharing between traditional and not traditional workers is relatively low. (**Cullum et al, 2013**)<sup>55</sup> They feel that they do not receive enough training and others state the low quality of training they received had no impact to their performance.( **Connelly and Gallagher,2004**)<sup>1</sup>

Providing contingent workers the right amount of training and support, boost them to become more productive and understand the strategy and goals of the organization. They could understand the impact of their work in the overall strategy of the organization.

Through proper training, contingent workers can develop their capabilities, increase their performance and increase the engagement with the organization.

Managers need also training. They have to cope with the challenges and find effective ways to manage and engage appropriately professionals, especially those who work under flexible conditions. They also have to learn the ways they can manage and lead a mix of workers, traditional and nontraditional, with different backgrounds, skills and motives. They have to deal with the relationships between those two groups, solve possible conflicts and achieve cohesiveness. Traditional workers may think that contingent workers are chosen for more challenging tasks and projects and the latter may fill as assisting workers and outsiders. Managers should try to keep balance in the workforce and help workers understand how each one is contributing to the organization's goals. **(Bersin et al, 2019)<sup>23</sup>**

#### **v) Compensation**

Using contingent professionals as a strategic solution and a mean of cost saving, organizations want to transform their payroll expenses from a fix cost (employing traditional, permanent workers) to a variable cost. The reality is that trying to compensate fairly contingent workers could be a daunting challenge for the organization. There are different types of nontraditional workers and each of them comes with different tax and legal implications. **(Oracle,2010)<sup>41</sup>**. That means that the work of payroll teams has become more complicated because they have to deal not only with wages, but also with different tax categories, differences in benefits etc. Contingent workers could be paid either through accounts payable or through organization's payroll system, depending on their category.

The start line is negotiations, either with the staffing firm or directly with the individual, in order to end up with a fair price for the given job or project. HR professionals should have in mind that evaluating performance of workers during the period of working in the organization is very important. They have the opportunity to redefine the first deal, especially in cases when the work of workers exceeds the expectations and given standards.

Research in the field of organizations' compensation strategies shows differences in benefits and payment between traditional and nontraditional workers.**(Salski, 2002)<sup>56</sup>**. One reason for this situation is that most of the times nontraditional professionals do not have access to benefits (indirect financial compensation, such as vacation time, insurance coverage and retirement plans). In the past, contingent workers were usually low-skilled workers, who

were working mainly in industry. These workers were paid less compared with traditional workers for performing the same work. Nowadays the context has changed. Struggling to find high quality, talented professionals, organizations now pay more in order to attract those workers. The payment gap between employees and contingent workers has closed and in some cases, contingent workers are paid more compared with nontraditional, especially consultants and some categories of freelancers.

Having distortions in pay structures (either for traditional workers or nontraditional ones) is a serious problem that HR has to solve. Pay secrecy belongs to the past, so everyone in the organization knows the compensation of the others. Negative feelings relating to payments could cause problems to the organizations, such as lower performance, lower commitment to organizational goals, and conflicts between workers. **(Connelly and Gallagher, 2004 )<sup>1</sup>**

Technology advancements allow organizations to develop advanced payroll systems. These systems facilitate a better way of contingent workforce management because organizations are able to have more accurate data on the type of workers they employ. The IT department is responsible to develop those systems, which are essential for the organization to monitor its payments. Others choose to cooperate with companies that provide payroll services for contingent workers. Some organizations use alternative payment methods, such as pay cards, mobile payments, multicurrency deposits, which increase organizations' mobility and flexibility. **(Cloud Pay, 2018)<sup>57</sup>**

In order to survive this talent-hunting game and attract high skilled workers, organizations have to differentiate from the others and offer contingent workers more. Competitive benefits programs that include medical insurance, life insurance, paid vacations could be really tempting for contingent workers and could improve the employer brand of the organization.

#### **vi) Performance reviews**

The existence of performance reviews plays a significant role in the evaluation of participation of contingent workers in the overall strategy of the organization. Through this performance feedback, HR professionals could evaluate workers' performance and identify learning gaps, variation from predefined objectives, and areas that need improvement. **(Oracle, 2010)<sup>41</sup>** Those gaps will be covered through the participation of workers in learning

programs. Lack of these tools could lead to difficulties in evaluating the total contribution of workers (risk versus performance) in organization's goals.

At the beginning, organizations could use the same performance models that they use also for their current employees. The main goal is the development of an up-to-date data base, in which HR professional could refer to and see the evolution of their workers over time. In that data base the key performers should be listed in a discrete category that helps the organization to have easy access on them in order of using them in similar future projects.

The first step of a correct evaluation program should begin from the recruitment of workers. It is the time when the main goals and responsibilities are set up, workers are informed about the project they are going to participate, their role and the fulfillment period. Organizations should observe nontraditional workers, supervise them and evaluate their work and performance on real time and provide employees on time feedback.

### **3.3 HR and workforce analytics**

#### **3.3.1 Why organizations use workforce analytics**

The contemporary business environment of the last years has been affected by main factors, such as the major developments in technology and IT sector, the rising participation of alternative work arrangements, the global economic recession etc. This situation led organizations to remodel and reshape their strategic planning of their business objectives and goals, changes that affected all the functions of the organizations, including the HR department.

The huge amount of available data about people (workforce and future candidates) and the organization itself, combined with the evolution and the implementation of HR technology creates an opportunity for the HR department to shift its functions to a more quantitative approach. HR leaders are now able to use a plethora of tools in order to combine, correlate and analyze the available data, finding ways to improve not only the individual performance of employees but also the overall organizational performance, by making more accurate decisions and predictions. The classic function of HR should be changed and shifted from the traditional "personnel issues" (recruitment, selection, training, development and

compensation) to a more dynamic model, which is able to provide real-time information on more complex questions.

This new situation does not mean that HR functions should transform to purely analytics functions. The human factor remains the most important and valuable asset of the organization and the analysis of employees' behavior and their personality traits are still elements that play a stellar role in the success of the organizations.

The number of the organizations which develop workforce analytics functions steadily increases. Even though making accurate predictions about the future is extremely difficult, especially nowadays when various unexpected events, such as the Coronavirus pandemic, change the business environment, effective workforce analytics could improve the ability of the organizations to respond to difficult situations and make more accurate decisions about workforce matters.

### **3.3.2 Brief History**

The very first known attempt to use data in the HR sector was made during the Industrial Revolution by Frederic Winslow Taylor in the late 1800's. More specifically, this young engineer, through his book "Principles of scientific management" developed the theory of scientific management, based on which labor productivity could be improved by "scientifically determined management practices". (Daft, 2010)<sup>58</sup>

The theory of Taylor, who is also known as the father of scientific management, consists of 4 principles (Mihiotis, 2005)<sup>59</sup>:

- i) Replacement of empirical and traditional working methods with procedures developed after scientific study of individuals
- ii) Managers of the past time were responsible for the selection, training and development of workers instead of the used common practice, where workers had to train themselves
- iii) Cooperation between managers and workers in order to ensure that new scientific methods were being followed
- iv) Efficient division of work between managers and workers, so that managers would be responsible from the one hand for applying scientific management principles in order to plan the work and workers from the other hand to perform the given tasks

The main purpose of Taylor's theory was finding the optimal way to perform a job task by incorporating scientific approaches into management practices, which would lead to increased labor productivity and improved working conditions.

In 1913, Hugo Munsterberg, a Taylor's student, published his book "Psychology and Industrial Efficiency" where for the first time was mentioned that the "psychology" factor of the worker (intelligence, memory, attention, skills, nature) played a stellar role in the overall labor productivity. He actually simulated the job of a trolley car driver to understand how to optimize their decision making, comparing this job to that of a ship captain. His early work was the beginning of what was later called the "assessment center." (Bersin, 2015)<sup>60</sup>

During WW1, Carl Jung, a Freud's student, came up with the theory of "social intelligence" for workers selection. According to his theory, responsible for the productivity of workers are not only their individual skills but also their personalities. Jung's theory focused on two personality types/ attitudes: 1. extraversion ("outward-turning") and 2. introversion ("inward-turning"), and four psychological types/ functions 1. sensation (perception by means of immediate apprehension of the visible relationship between subject and object), 2. intuition (perception of processes in the background, for example motivation of people), 3. feeling (function of intellectual cognition; the forming of logical conclusions) and 4. thinking (function of subjective estimation, value oriented thinking). The first two functions are irrational and the latter are rational. (Wikipedia, 2021)<sup>61</sup>

Jung's theory became the base of Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), one of the most commonly used questionnaire among organizations worldwide, even nowadays. In 1940 Isabel Briggs-Myers and her mother Katharine Briggs tried to make Jung's theory of social intelligence more understandable and useful to general public. The basic principle of the theory was that after observation of various peoples' behavior, the results that came up were that the pattern of their behavior was quite orderly and consistent, and that could be explained by the differences in the ways individuals prefer to use their perception and judgment. (The Mayers & Briggs Foundation, n.d)<sup>62</sup> In 1967, Briggs-Myers published the "Introduction to Type", in which she presented the results of their research. According to that book, there are 16 personality types, based on combinations of the following preferences of "objects" : 1. favorite world (inner world – introversion or outer world- extraversion), 2. information (sensing or intuition), 3. decisions (thinking or feeling), 4. structure (Judging or perceiving)



It is also worth to mention the contribution of Jac Fitz-enz in the sector of workforce analytics. Fitz-enz, through his books “How to measure Human Resource Management” (1984) and “ROI of Human Capital” (2000), proposed the idea of measurement of human resource activities. According to Fitz-enz, “the main purpose of HR Metrics is to capture the economic value of people in the organization”(CIPD, 2017)<sup>63</sup>. According to his theory, organizations should combine HR function with the most common accounting and financial business tools, such as revenue, expenses, ROI etc, in order to create a new and more understandable number of metrics, known as human capital accounting metrics. Some examples are : 1. human capital revenue factor = revenue/FTEs (number of full-time equivalent), which is a very simple productivity measure, 2. human capital cost factor = Total pay and benefits costs + pay costs for contingent workforce + costs of absenteeism + costs of turnover, which measures the total cost of human capital and 3. Human capital value added = Revenue –(expenses –pay and benefits)/FTEs, which measures the average profitability per FTE etc.

Nowadays organizations can use a plethora of tools, which provide them with a large amount of data, in order to test and profile people. The widespread use of social media platforms, such as Facebook and LinkedIn allows organizations to evaluate also the “social footprint” of possible candidates.

### **3.3.3 What are workforce analytics?**

At this moment in bibliography does not occur a commonly accepted name for workforce-based analytics. The main reason for that situation is that the term/definition which is used depends on the function for which the data are used. The most common terms that are used are people analytics, HR analytics, workforce analytics and talent analytics.

According Guenole, Ferrar and Feinzig (2017)<sup>64</sup> the most accurate name to be used is “workforce analytics” and SHRM Foundation also uses this term in its reports and articles. This term describes with the best possible way the majority of professionals who work in the organization and contribute to its success and the majority of all possible present and future aspects of the functions of HR department. It contains not only the employees of the organization but also the different categories of contingent professionals who work for it. The definition that they give to the term “workforce analytics” is that “Workforce analytics



is the discovery, interpretation, and communication of meaningful patterns in workforce-related data to inform decision making and improve performance”

The term “talent analytics” does not provide analytics that could illustrate an overall image of the organization and that because of the definition of the term “talent”. According to CIPD, “Talent consists of those individuals who can make a difference to organizational performance either through their immediate contribution or, in the longer-term, by demonstrating the highest levels of potential”. It is easy to understand that this definition does not represent the professionals of the organizations as a whole.

The term “human capital” is also widely used, especially among consulting organization. This term presents people only as financial/accounting assets, without consideration of aspects that have to do with professionals’ behavior and characteristics.

As far as the term “human resource analytics” is concerned, it is an accurate definition because it deals with the analytics that come from the HR department and its function. The main problem that occurs is that usually the functions of a HR department are related with the permanent professionals of the organization and do not include other categories of contingent workers, such as freelancer, consultants, interns etc.

Another commonly used term is “people analytics”. The main problem with that term is that “people” has a broader meaning compared with the term “workforce”. It could include and analyze factors except for the workforce of the organization, such as consumers’ or supplier’ behavior and characteristics.

Analytic tools provide organization’s leaders with real time data about workforce planning, performance management, ongoing development and other workforce strategies. According to a Deloitte report, some of the most common functions where workforce analytics are applied in practice are (Daunt, n.d)<sup>65</sup>

- Recruitment and Selection process

For this function, workforce analytics evaluate the efficiency of the procedures followed by the HR department which have to do the recruitment and selection process. Some commonly used analytics are : i) activity measures such as number of vacancies recruited for fulfillment of vacancies internally, permanent/temporary jobs recruited for full-time/part-time jobs recruited for positions with ready candidate, number of people interviewed, external hire

rate (executive, management, other), ii) measures of efficiency and effectiveness such as time to recruit (compared with market benchmark), offer acceptance rate, cost of recruitment, sufficiency of appropriate candidates for selection, acceptance rate, external cost per hire and iii) organizational performance measures such as quality of recruits/effectiveness of new hires, quality of recruits by educational level, first-year turnover

- Workforce planning

For this function, workforce analytics are used for analyzing current needs and forecast future needs and implement workforce-related actions. Some commonly used analytics are : i) descriptive measures such as predictability of work requirements, overtime control measures and overtime hours per headcount, skills inventory compared with skills requirements, maximization and utilization of staff capacity, number or percentage of FT, contract or temporary staff, workforce stability and ii) measures of efficiency and effectiveness such as workforce planning process continual process improvement, extent and quality of internal labor market modeling, effectiveness of matching supply and demand, effectiveness of talent utilization etc

- Talent acquisition and movement

Workforce analytics provide information about the level of effectiveness of recruiting procedure. This information is crucial for the organization in order to understand not only its talent needs but also the trends that affect the workforce movement, especially the reasons of workers' resignation. Workforce analytics also help organizations to set the future demand for needed skills as well as the ways to cover this demand. Some commonly used analytics are : i) activity measures such as turnover of high-performers and revenue per high-performing employee, number selected for internal transfers/promotions, promotion speed ratio, number of employees who believe they can develop internally, overall cost of talent development, ii) efficiency and effectiveness measures such as effectiveness of talent development process and time to develop to lead role/high performance level and iii) organizational performance measures such as chargeable rate (per hour charge in order to have profit)

- Workforce performance

Workforce analytics in this case evaluate the performance of organization's workers, measure it and find the top performers. They provide leaders with the necessary information in order to understand the way performance affects retention and create an effective performance management program. Some commonly used analytics are: i) descriptive measures such as average time to promotion, total promotions/total transfers, new-hire performance satisfaction, percentage of staff working at acceptable performance level, performance measures broken down by background experience (internally trained versus externally trained), career path ratio (employees moving upwards/ all employee moves), ii) measures of efficiency such as effectiveness of performance management process, effectiveness of feedback, percentage of performance appraisals held on time (by functional area), percentage of personal development plans complying with business plan, percentage of personal development plans achieved (by functional area) and iii) organizational performance measures such as productivity measures –revenue/operating cost per employee

- Demographics and diversity

Analytics help to identify possible issues about diversity matters, for example men versus women, permanent employees versus contingent workforce, possible issues among different nationalities (in organizations with multinational operation, etc), and help to solve them before they become a problem for the organization. Some commonly used analytics are: i) descriptive measures such as workforce demographics/diversity distribution (age, gender, tenure, disability, sexual orientation), pay differentials by diversity criteria, promotion rate by diversity criteria, full-time/part-time jobs recruited, staffing rate –part-time, staffing rate –temporary, staffing rate –less than one year, percentage of team members that are female, percentage diversity (at executive level, management level, other levels), ratio of men to women in management

- Learning and development

Workforce analytics in this case evaluate the effectiveness of the available learning and development programs. Some commonly used analytics are: i) activity measures such as annual training hours per employee, spend per employee on L&D, spend on training as a proportion of profit/payroll, L&D costs as percentage of labor costs/ revenue, overall cost of training and development activities, ii) efficiency and effectiveness measures such as

effectiveness of learning management system, quality of training measures, effectiveness of e-learning programs, participant satisfaction levels with training activities, supervisor evaluation of employee performance post-training and iii) organizational performance measures such effectiveness of training (ROI)

- Retention

Retention is a crucial issue that matters organizations. Organizations invest time and money to their staff through their learning and development programs. Especially with those professionals who are intended to cover key positions in the organization, leaders are willing to offer them more benefits in order to become members of their organization. That is the reason why data about turnover issues (reasons why employees leave, who intend to leave in the future etc) are very important for the overall strategy of the organization. By analyzing those data, managers are able to verify possible reasons that affect turnover, manage them in order to minimize this potential loss of skilled professionals. Some commonly used analytics are: i) activity measures such as staff turnover (compared with market benchmark), turnover of high-performers, retention rate, turnover of employees in key positions, proportion of team leavers that are female, voluntary/involuntary turnover rate (executive, management, other), resignation rate, retirement rate, workforce stability, efficiency and effectiveness measures such as effectiveness of processes to retain high-performers, cost of voluntary turnover etc

### **3.3.4. Building a workforce analytics team**

A common mistake that occurs when analyzing workforce data is to arrive at a useless conclusion. (Guenole et al. 2017)<sup>64</sup> One very important aspect in the “science” of workforce analytics is not simply to collect and analyze data from different sources and databases but to make the analysis of those data meaningful for the organization. Analysts should be able to use the available data in order to prevent a problem or a future situation for the organization. They should also understand and communicate the importance of their work and the ways workforce analytics could improve the ability and the effectiveness of making decisions on critical issues for various interest groups, such as leaders, investors, boards, managers and employees. Therefore, workforce analytics is not only to improve the efficiency of HR operations but also to improve the overall business outcome.

Various issues that appear and have to do with inefficient usage of available data could easily be explained by the lack of experience, training and familiarization with the new information of HR managers. The best solution, in order to overcome this border, is the establishment of a workforce analytics team, managed by a workforce analytics leader, who would report directly to the Chief Human Resource Officer (CHFO). This team needs to maintain strong connections not only with the HR department but also with the other departments of the organization. Smooth cooperation between the analytics team and the other departments of the organizations increases the importance and the acceptance of the team's role and the results of its work. At this point it should be mentioned that it is very common HR leaders to act like "intermediaries" between workforce analytics teams and the others organizations' leaders.

From the other hand, because workforce data have mainly to deal with people, HR managers should also be involved to the whole process. They are probably one of the main receivers of the results of the analytics and most of the times they are responsible for planning the appropriate actions, based on those results. The members of the workforce analytics teams sometime have also to overcome the lack of experience and the traditional approach of many HR leaders, who cannot understand the ways results of the analytics could help them improve the efficiency of their work. The only way to overcome this obstacle is through well prepared training programs and allowing HR leaders to take an active role in the whole process. HR leaders and workforce analytics team should discuss about the HR functions prioritize them based on their contribution to the organization's performance and analyze examples of other organizations which implement successfully workforce analytics into their functions.

As far as the prerequisite characteristics and skills that that every member of the team, including the team leader, need to have in order to be successful to their work and earn credibility is concerned, the following could be mentioned:

- Business Acumen

It is the ability to understand, interpret and deal with various business situations. Business acumen is obtained by the experience and the expertise professionals gained during their working life and the ability to use that experience in order to make appropriate decisions which lead to better outcome for the organization they work for. They include financial

literacy (understanding of key account concepts and factors that affect business metrics), political astuteness (understanding organization relationships and influence others), internal awareness (understanding organizations' work environment) and external awareness (understanding the external environments).

- Consulting skills

It is the ability to improve aspects of organization's functions and performance by providing specialist expertise. They include problem definition (understanding and defining a problem), hypothesis building (identifying potential causes of the problems and discovering possible ways of solving them), project management (monitoring the members of the team to carry through with the work they were assigned), solution development (proposing possible solutions to the problems and finding the most appropriate), change management (understanding the alteration in the behavior of workers caused by changes in the working environment and helping them familiarize with those changes), stakeholder management (identifying the interests of different stakeholders and trying to align their differences as much as possible)

- HR skills

It is necessary for the members of the team to have HR skills because it is very common the implementation of finding of workforce analytics to cause changes in HR practices and strategies. They include HR sub function skills (knowing the subfunctions of HR, such as recruiting, training, compensation etc), HR interdependencies (understanding the way HR functions are linked and interact to each other), international HR (knowing the HR international environment- differences in legislation and other policies that differentiate the organizational strategy), privacy and ethics (knowing privacy regulations and ethics) and an HR "sixth sense"(having strong HR knowledge and experience-usually experienced HR professionals )

- Work (industrial and organizational) psychology skills

Industrial and organizational psychologists are professionals, who observe and evaluate the behavior of workers in a workplace. They need to have industrial psychology skills (trying to maximize individual potential) and organizational psychology skills (trying to maximize organizational potential)

- Data science skills

These skills are prerequisites for team members in order to run the analytics models and evaluate their results. They include quantitative skills - mathematics and statistics (building statistical models), computer science - databases and programming (checking data from different resources and databases and trying to integrate them with the best possible way) and data awareness (understanding which data are the most relevant for the problems the team need to solve)

- Communication skills

It is the ability to create and communicate effectively various messages to the various interest groups among the organization. They include storytelling (sharing stories or explaining events through narrative), visualization (using various tools and technology in order to present information), presenting (communicating effectively data and results through appropriate presentation), written communication (creating structured written messages) and marketing (developing communications in order to convince interest groups about the importance of the results of workforce analytics)

## 4. Contingent Workforce in the European Union

### 4.1 Introduction

Flexible working arrangements had a bad reputation among many countries in Europe. In fact, 30 years ago nontraditional work arrangements were illegal in some parts of Europe, including Greece and Denmark. (Sap Fieldglass, n.d.)<sup>66</sup> In 1999 the countries of European Union had to harmonize with the Council Directive 1999/70/EC, where flexible working arrangements had to be accepted from all the members of E.U. Based on that Directive, social partners had to negotiate agreements in order to improve flexibility and competitiveness of the organizations, including flexible working arrangements, such as part time work, seasonal work, etc (Official Journal of the European Communities, 1999)<sup>67</sup>. But it was only in 2008, with Article 3 of Directive 2008/104/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of European Union, when countries of EU were forced to accept the operation of “temporary-work agencies” (staffing firms) and work of “temporary agency workers”. According to the Article, there were major differences in the use, status and working conditions of the operation of staffing firms among the countries of European Union. Political authorities had the duty to develop legislation in order to protect the interests of contingent workers, not only in terms of pay but also for working conditions and benefits.

### 4.2 Categories of contingent workers in European Union

#### 4.2.1. Temporary Workers and Part time workers

Eurostat provides data only for temporary workers and part time workers and not for the other type of alternative work arrangements. So, according to Eurostat and based on 2019 data, almost 30% of the employees in European Union work under flexible work arrangements ·employees who work in temporary jobs consist of the 11% of the total number of employees in EU and employees who work part time consist of 18,5%. (Eurostat, 2020)<sup>68</sup>. The percentage for temporary workers remained almost constant since 2005 but the percentage of part-time workers increased slightly (from in 2005 to in 2019) (Eurostat, 2020)<sup>69</sup>. The situation has changed in 2020 because of the Coronavirus pandemic, but this topic is going to be analyzed at the next part of the dissertation.



Based on the Data given by Eurostat, the first thing that immediately has to be mentioned is the great differences in the philosophy of use alternative work arrangements among European countries. For example, as far as the percentage of temporary workers is concerned, we observe that there are countries, such as Montenegro and Spain which exceed a lot the average percentage. In fact, the percentage of those two countries is more than twice as high as the average percentage of EU. As Montenegro is concerned, the economy of the country is heavily based on tourism. So, a large proportion of the given work positions is composed of temporary jobs, seasonal jobs and interns, who mainly work on services and jobs related to tourism, such as hotels, restaurants, tourist agencies etc.

The situation in Spain is different. **(European Trade Union Institute, 2018)**<sup>70</sup> Temporary workers there are usually low skill workers in agriculture sector (60,72% of total workers) and construction sector (almost 41%). The labor market in Spain is characterized by lack of specialized qualified professionals, even though the unemployment rate is still high. The main strategy and priority of Spanish organizations in terms of choosing and employing their workforce is minimizing the total labor cost and they are not interested in developing methods to increase talent of their employees.

On the other hand, the lowest levels of temporary workers as a percentage of total workers appeared in Lithuania and Romania· in both countries the percentage is 1,1%. As far as Lithuania is concerned, one factor that explains these low rates is the restrictions imposed on fixed term contracts. According to the Lithuanian Labor Code, concluding a fixed-term contract on a permanent job was prohibited. Even though changes have been made due to economic crisis as an effort to strengthen employment and reduce unemployment rates, the percentage remains low **(Eurofound, 2013)**<sup>71</sup>.

In Romania the situation was different. Until 2015, when a new legislation about temporary workers was introduced, temporary work had a bad reputation among workers, mainly because of the existence of pay discrimination among temporary workers and permanent workers.**(Eurofound, 2015)**<sup>72</sup>. The new Labor Code protects the rights of temporary workers on equal payments and other benefits, compared with permanent workers. It also reclaims the operation of temporary work agencies, where several illegalities were discovered, after a number of anti-feud controls were held.

As far as part time work is concerned, Netherlands and Switzerland are the EU “champions”, with 46,8 % and 39,1% respectively. The data in both countries are similar. Part time work in both countries was introduced as mean for workers to achieve work-life balance and personal wellbeing. But this extended use of these alternative work arrangements increased gender inequalities· data show that women form the largest share of part time workers. **(OECD iLibrary, 2020)**<sup>73</sup> According to Swiss Labor Force Survey, the majority of part time workers (58%) are women and most of them are working mothers. There is also an increase in numbers of working fathers who choose to work part time. That is a key factor that explains the low rates of underemployment (workers who are wishing to work more and are able to do that at as short notice). It should also be mentioned that in both Switzerland and Netherlands the gap between working men and women in part time positions is the greatest in European Union.

At the lowest point of use of part-time workers are Bulgaria and North Macedonia, with 1,8% and 4% respectively. Part time work arrangements in Bulgaria are rare tactic and it is mostly involuntary· workers work part time because they are not able to find a full time job. **(Eurofound, 2020)**<sup>74</sup>. Even though North Macedonia has one of the lowest unemployment rate in Europe, the percentage of part time workers declined the previous years, from 6% in 2006 to 4% in 2019.

#### **4.2.2. Telework – ICT Mobile Work (T/ICTMW)**

The percentage of professionals who worked from their home either in regular basis or frequently among European countries increased slightly the decade 2009-2019, when the pandemic of Coronavirus appeared and changed the previous situation. **(European Commission, 2020)**<sup>75</sup>

In particular, based on a European Commission Research Data on telework levels before and during the Pandemic, we observe that before 2019 only 15% of all employees in the European Union had some kind of experience in telework. The percentage of regular home based teleworkers remained constant at about 5.4%, during the decade while the percentage of professionals who worked sometimes from their home increased from 5,2% to 9%. Working from home was more common among self-employed professionals rather than dependent workers.

The sectors, where the highest involvement in telework is observed, are the IT sector (40%) followed by knowledge-intensive businesses and education sector with approximately 20%. High skilled professionals and managers, professionals with very good computer skills and knowledge, also were already used to work outside their office; through this “convenience” they were able to work with greater autonomy.

It is obvious that large discrepancies in the percentages of use of telework are observed among European Countries. Based on 2009 data, telework was more widespread in Denmark (approximately 27%), followed by Sweden, Austria, Luxemburg and Finland with circa 20%. At the bottom line are Romania, Cyprus and Bulgaria with 0,5%, 1% and 2% respectively. There was an improvement in the implementation of telework among European countries, based on 2019 data. According to them, Sweden and the Netherlands reached 37,5%, followed by Luxemburg with 33% and Finland with 32%. Romania, Bulgaria and Cyprus remained at the bottom line, with a slight improvement of their percentages (2%, 2% and 3% respectively)

Based on the same research, the differences that are observed among European Countries are due to the following factors:

i) Differences in the industrial structure

Telework employment rates are larger in countries, where professionals have computer skills and knowledge and a large part of total workforce is employed in knowledge- and ICT-intensive services, such as countries in Northern Europe

ii) Differences within sectors

Even though the largest rates of teleworkers appear in specific sectors, such as IT and other communication services and knowledge intensive business services, these rates are differentiated among countries. For instance, based in 2018 data, in Sweden 70% of professionals in ICT sector teleworked whereas in Germany and Italy only 32% and 11% respectively. That implies that it is not only necessary for professionals in a given sector to have access to telework but it also depends on other factors, such as management of organizations and the leadership styles they promote, legislation and other policies etc.

iii) The distribution of employment by organization size

Large organizations (with more than 50 employees) are more likely to use telework than smaller ones. The reason that explains that situation is that larger organizations have the ability not only to develop appropriate networks which facilitate telework but cover the additional costs which derive from it as well.

iv) The rate of self-employment

The percentages of self-employment professionals who prefer telework are high because these professionals work primarily from their own space. Even more organizations choose to cooperate with self-employers and that situation increase the overall telework rates. Countries such as Sweden and the Netherlands with a large percentage of the self-employed are in the first places, with percentages approaching 70%.

v) Workers' digital skills

Professionals with strong digital skills are more likely to adopt telework. But the extent to which professionals are familiar with digital skills and in general computer knowledge also vary among countries. In countries with low levels of telework, digital skills of professionals are low.

### **4.3. Contingent work arrangements in Greece**

#### **4.3.1. Evolution of Greek Labor Legislation**

Alternative work arrangements were introduced for the first time in Greece in 1939. Greek legislators through the Compulsory Law **2000/1939** "About taking measures against unemployment" tried to find ways to strengthen employment during WW2. Based on this Compulsory Law, organizations which were not able to employ their entire workforce (or part of it) on all working days were given the opportunity to apply to the Minister of Labor in order to take an official authorization to employ their staff on a rotating basis (shifts work) by setting a maximum number of hours per day. or setting a maximum number of wages per month. Also, organizations would no longer be able to terminate these specific employment contracts or to proceed to new recruitments if they do not re-employ the workforce that they had already fired.(nomos,n.d)<sup>76</sup>

The Compulsory Law 2000/1939 was amended by the Legislative Decree (L.G) **424/1941**. Based on this L.G., public sector organizations, organizations of public interest and public utility services were also able to apply shift work. In these cases, the relevant application was made to the Minister of Labor, and after the relevant approval, the required changes were made both in the working hours of the employees and in their earnings. **(nomos,n.d)**<sup>77</sup>

Part-time work arrangements were introduced for the first time in Greece in 1990, with the Article 38 of Law **1892/1990**. **(E-nomothesia, 2020)**<sup>78</sup> According to this Law, organizations (including Public Sector) and employees are able to sign either a temporary or a permanent contract, and agree on a daily or weekly or fortnightly or monthly work, which will be shorter than the traditional full-time work. It is also mentioned that part time employees should not be treated unfavorably compared to their full time colleagues.

The Article 3 of Law 1892/1990 also allows employers to impose a system of rotating employment (rotational employment or shift work is considered the employment with fewer days per week or less weeks per month or less months per year or a combination of the above with full-time working hours) for a period which should not exceed 9 months instead of proceeding with redundancies of their workforce, always with the consent of the legal representatives of the employees.

According to the Law, it is invalid the termination of the employment contract because of non-acceptance by the employees their employers' proposal for amendment of full time contracts to part-time employment. Part-time employees are also entitled to annual leaves as well as vocational pays and other social services. They have also the ability to participate in the same organizational training programs and activities as full time employees and they have priority in filling full-time job openings in the organization.

New forms of alternative work arrangements were introduced in Greek legislation in 1998 through the Law **2639/1998** **(E-nomothesia, n.d)**<sup>79</sup>. In particular, Article 1 states that in cases of agreement between an employer and an employee for the provision of services or work, for a definite or indefinite period of time, especially in cases of per unit payment, remote work, home working, it is presumed that the two parties do not have to sign an employment contract.

In Article 5 of Law 2639/1998 is presented for the first time the concept of Private Employment Consultants Offices (known as temporary staffing agencies). These offices

were actually mediators between organizations and potential employees. Their subject of work was finding and providing employees on behalf of organizations. At the very beginning of the operation of these firms, they were able to provide organizations only with certain categories of workers, such as accountants, cleaning crews, employees in construction or technical works etc.

In 2001, Article 20 of Law **2956/2001** refers to temporary employment firms, whose subject of activity was the provision of work by their employees to another employer (indirect employer) in the form of temporary employment (**E-nomothesia, 2020**)<sup>80</sup>. In this case, temporary employment is defined as the work that is provided to another employer (indirect employer) for a limited period of time from an employee who is related to his employer (direct employer) by a contract or employment relationship of fixed or indefinite duration and is allowed only under certain conditions. These organizations could only i) work as mediators between employees and organizations and ii) evaluate and train human resources.

As far the rights of workers employed by a temporary employment firm is concerned, the provision of employment in the form of temporary employment requires a prior written fixed-term or indefinite employment contract. The contract, which is concluded between the Temporary Employment Firm (direct employer) and the employee must necessarily indicate the working conditions, the duration of the contract, the terms of employment to the indirect employer (s), the terms of remuneration (which may not be less than the general accepted collective agreements) and the employee's insurance. From the indirect employers' scope, they should inform the Temporary Employment Firm about the required professional qualifications or skills of the employees, the possible special medical care needed and the special characteristics of the position to be filled. All these special requirements must be included in the contract. The contract must also specify the major or particular risks, related to the specific job and the duration of work to the indirect employer, which should not exceed 8 months. In case the work continues beyond the time limit of 8 months, it is considered that the contract has been converted from fixed term to an indefinite time contract with the indirect employer. Employees on a temporary employment contract enjoy the same level of protection and safety at work as the other employees of the indirect employer.

The Law **3846/2010** protects and improves the working conditions of the employees who work with alternative work agreements and has amended Article 1 of the Law 2639/1198

(Taxheaven, 2010)<sup>81</sup> In particular, Article 1 enacts that in cases of agreement between an employer and an employee for the provision of services or work, for a fixed-term or indefinite period of time, especially in cases of per unit payment, remote work - telework and home working, when work is provided in person, exclusively or mainly to the same employer for nine (9) constant months, it is presumed that it conceals an employment contract.. The Law gives also the opportunity to full-time employees, in cases they have completed one constant year of work, to request the conversion of their contracts into part-time contracts for a specific period of time.

As far as remote work – telework is concerned, Article 5 stipulates that the employer is obliged to deliver in written form to the employees all the necessary information related to the execution of their work. In particular, employees must be informed about the hierarchical connection with their superiors in the organization, their tasks in detail, the estimation of their remuneration package, the measurement of their working time, the estimation of the costs caused by this special form of work, which include telecommunication and equipment costs, equipment failures, etc.

If the contract contains an agreement for tele-readiness (tele-readiness describes the situation when employees remain available for work after their working hours), the time limits and the response deadlines of the employees must be well defined.(kepea,n.d)<sup>82</sup> The employer fully takes on the total cost of telecommunications and provides employees with the necessary technical support needed to provide their work uneventfully. The employer is also responsible to take on the total cost of repairing the equipment used to perform telework or to replace them in case of damage.

According to the Law **3899/2010**, the maximum duration of the contract signed between employees and direct employers should not exceed the time limit of 36 months, instead of 8 months that used to be based on the Law 2956/2001. (E-nomothesia, 2010)<sup>83</sup> And at this case, if provided work exceeds that time limit, it is considered that the contract has been converted from fixed term to an indefinite time contract with the indirect employer.

In 2012 and 2018 there were law improvements (Law 4052/2012 and Law 4254/2018, known as Temp Legislation) in order to provide a minimum protection of agency workers and freelancers. The key point of legislation was the avoidance of discriminations between those workers and the permanent workers of the organizations. Such discriminations are



payment for overtime, 14 payments instead of 12, receiving termination indemnity in the event of termination etc. (Ernst & Young, 2016)<sup>84</sup>

The main purpose of Law **4052/2012** was the harmonization with the European Parliament Directive 2008/104 / EC / 19.11.2008 of the European Parliament regarding to the temporary employment conditions (Taxheaven, 2012)<sup>85</sup>. Namely, this Law is about the regulation of the rights of the employees who work through staffing firms as well as the control of way the staffing firms operate. According to this Directive, the working conditions of the employees should be at least the same as those that would apply if the recruitment had been made directly by the indirect employer. The ordinances concerning the fight against different forms of discrimination and the protection of motherhood are also applied. Employees under temporary work agreements have the same opportunities as other employees of the organization to be hired for permanent jobs. This category of employees could be hired only in order to cover emergency or seasonal needs.

Based on this Law, the activities which staffing firms could carry out are broadening with the ability to perform consulting and career guidance services. Staffing firms and the indirect employers are jointly and severally liable to the employees through the 3 parties signed contract (employee – direct employer – indirect employer) and are responsible for satisfaction of employees' salary rights and insurance. If the terms of the contract claim that responsible for the payment of salaries and insurance contributions are the direct employer, the indirect employers have no obligations. The staffing firm has also obligation to employ both a safety technician and an occupational physician and provide their services to the employees.

In 2018, the Law **4254/2014** amended an ordinance of Law 4052/2012 (**E-nomothesia, 2020**)<sup>86</sup>. According to the latter Law, employees through staffing firms could be employed not only in order to cover emergency and seasonal needs but also to cover permanent needs.

#### **4.3.2. Categories of contingent workforce**

- Part time workers and temporary workers

The percentage of temporary workers in Greece was 8,6% and for part time workers was 9%, lower compared with the European Union average. According to Eurofound analysis, gender inequalities appear in Greek labour market: the percentage of women, who work part



time, is 5% greater than percentage of men. Based on the findings, an increase in the percentage of part time workers during the financial crisis is observed, but this increase was not by choice. More than 70% workers forced to choose part time jobs because of the high unemployment rate and the decrease of full time jobs in Greek labor market. Another additional reason was the low level of minimum wage.

The economy of the country is strongly based on tourism· that is a reason that explains the fluctuations on part time rates and unemployment rates. There are workers, especially youths and residents of touristic areas, such as islands, who prefer to work on seasonal jobs than to work on regular basis. **(Eurofound, 2020)**<sup>87</sup>

These arrangements were less widespread the years before the economic crisis. Unfortunately, based on the ILO survey, there is a misuse of nontraditional employment in Greece **(International Labor Organization, 2014)**<sup>88</sup>. Organizations use contingent workers in order to cover their fixed and constant needs instead of covering strategic needs because of business cycle and fluctuations of demand. Nontraditional employment was accepted from workers as a way to deal with unemployment and inactivity rather than a way to enter the market with a view to a more “secure” employment.

The annual report 2020 about the Greek Economy and Employment, published by the GSEE Labor Institute confirms the difficult situation mentioned above **(GSEE Labor Institute, 2020)**<sup>89</sup>. This report raised concerns over the effects of the economic crisis on job insecurity and the abuse of "institutionally non- regulated" forms of flexible working arrangements. Based on data given from the Ministry of Labor and Social Security's Information System “Ergani”, in 2019 the 45.1% of the total recruitments were full time contracts while 54.9% were part-time and rotating employment contracts, with the 77% of them represented by part-time contracts.

Based on data presented by the Institute, a rapid increase of alternative work contracts is observed in the decade 2009-2019. In particular, while in 2009 only 21 % of the new contracts signed were nontraditional, in 2019 the percentage soared to 54.9%, recording an overall increase of 155%! More specifically, the largest percentage growth is observed in period 2009-2010 with 57% (from 21% in 2009 to 33,1 % in 2010), followed by the period 2010-2011 with 19,6 % (from 33,1% in 2010 to 39,6% in 2011). The following years the percentage of new alternative work contracts signed as a part of total contracts signed

continued to rise. In 2014 for the first time the total new alternative work contracts exceeding the corresponding full time contracts signed and they reached their pick in 2015, where the 55,5% of the total new contracts were nontraditional.

During the years of recession, a number of legitimate interventions were introduced. From the scope of the organizations, these interventions would improve flexibility and competitiveness of organizations, like the increase of maximum duration of fixed contracts and wage adjustments. From the other hand these changes would be a mean to reduce the very high rates of unemployment through creating new jobs and maintaining the existing ones (**Hyz and Karamanis, 2014**)<sup>90</sup>. As far as the second “goal” is concerned, the results were not encouraging: even though the new contracts were mainly flexible, total employment continued to fell.

- Telework – ICT Mobile Work (T/ICTMW)

In 2019 SEV (Hellenic Federation of Enterprises) published a special report about telework in Greece and tried to determine the main reasons why telework (until 2019) was not widespread in Greece, ranking the country in the 18<sup>th</sup> position among European countries with 5% of total employment. The percentage of telework is formed as follows: 1,7 % consists of home based teleworkers and 3,3 % consists of teleworkers who frequently or occasionally work outside their office (**SEV,2019**)<sup>16</sup>

The sectors, in which the greatest rates of teleworkers were appeared, are mainly knowledge-intensive sectors, such as IT, health services and logistics. In particular, 32,4% of IT and technology professionals, 29,1% of Information and Communication technicians and 22,3% of high skilled professionals and managers telework in Greece.

The cases of employees who telework on a permanent basis are relatively rare in Greece and are related either in cases of emergency, where employees are not able to work from their offices, for example illness of a teleworker family member) or to employees who have an "international role", for example serve clients abroad, often in a different time zone.

One limiting factor in the implementation of telework in Greece derives also from the over-regulation and the complexity of labor and tax legislation. For example, according to the current legislation, is extremely difficult to fully control working hours as well as breaks and overtime work for teleworkers.

One problem that derives from the complexity of tax legislation has to do with the costs caused by the provision of telework. For example, while employers are responsible for covering those costs caused by the provision of telework from the employee and especially telecommunication costs, the strict restrictions about non-wage benefits do not facilitate organizations to cover them, without requiring from the employee to pay additional tax on payments that are essentially part of the organization's production costs and therefore they should not be mentioned as additional non-wage benefits.

As a conclusion, this special report states that strengthening telework constitutes a crucial factor for the increase of productivity in Greece, which fell over 12% in the years of economic crisis.

## **5. Contingent work in the Covid-19 era**

### **5.1. Introduction**

At the end of December 2019, Chinese public health authorities reported several cases of acute respiratory syndrome in Wuhan City, stated in Hubei province. Chinese scientists identified a novel coronavirus as the main causative agent and the disease is now referred to as coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The disease soon crossed the borders of China, became a pandemic (declared by World Health Organization on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020) and has since been observed in every continent of the world, leaving behind thousands of deaths. **(European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, 2020)<sup>91</sup>** .

The pandemic has forced most of the world's governments to take unprecedented measures to deal with its consequences. The number of deaths was increasing dramatically and without effective treatment and available vaccines by the end of 2020, countries had to take strict measures and "reduce" their economic activity. Taking measures like "lock down" organizations, schools, public services etc had to suspend their operations while much of the work was now done through telework.

Understandably, the impact of the pandemic created a shock to the labor market, creating conditions of uncertainty. Many jobs in various sectors of the economy were at risk or were lost, situation that increased concerns about the future among labor force. **(Branka, and Pouliakas, 2020)<sup>92</sup>**

### **5.2 Pandemic and government measures**

During the pandemic, most of the world's countries and the majority of governments of European Countries declared their countries in a "lock down regime". Restrictions on the free movement of citizens were imposed while the majority of organizations had to suspend their activities. In particular, only businesses which sold necessities, such as supermarkets and pharmacies, remained open. The lockdowns lasted from some days in some cases up to several months in others, depending on the progress of the pandemic in every country. For example in Greece some categories of businesses are still closed, such as playgrounds, creative employment centers and universities for lifelong teaching.

It is clear that governments had to take measures to support organizations, with the intention not only to help organizations to survive and increase their liquidity but also to prevent massive job losses. The packages of measures had to do with tax reduction, various business support allowances, such as the reduction of tax prepayment, rent subsidy, assistance for loan repayment, reductions in municipal taxes and other contributions, etc. **(Lund et al, 2020)<sup>93</sup>**.

As far as labor protection measures are concerned, governments developed mass furlough programs (furlough is a period of time when a company stops employing someone, usually temporarily, because the company does not have enough money or enough work) **(Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.)<sup>94</sup>**. Through those programs organizations were able to receive additional support and financial assistance to cover the payments of their non-working employees (eg suspension of work in Greece) or employees who worked part-time. The main goals of these programs are the avoidance of massive job losses and the increase of unemployment in a very difficult period. Organizations were also motivated to enhance remote work as well as to create modern digital infrastructure. Several countries also provided tax incentives for second earners in a family, as well as good quality of public childcare and elder care programs. **(Lund et al, 2020)<sup>93</sup>**

Naturally, not all categories of professionals were affected in the same degree by the pandemic. There were some categories of employees, such as full time permanent employees, who were protected from the risk of losing their jobs while some other categories were not so "lucky". The European Union recognized that the categories of professionals who were most affected were workers on temporary contracts (due to reduced demand and the effort of organizations to retain their permanent staff, most contracts were not renewed), involuntary part time workers and self employed. **(European Commission, 2020)<sup>95</sup>**

The European Member States have announced various packages of measures in order to provide relief to specific categories of professionals, such as delaying tax payment and reducing tax prepayment for self-employed or motivating organizations to retain the above categories of workers and not lay them off. Several Member States have also activated or improved frameworks that allow organizations to use more extensively flexible work arrangements and telework.

It is very important that the measures that governments will continue to take in order to boost economic activity to have a long-term perspective and planning since it is not yet clear which is going to be the final impact of the pandemic on the Global Economy and organizations as well.

### **5.3. Pandemic and organizations**

The pandemic affected more or less all sectors of economic activity. Some of the sectors which were most affected were customer service sector and sales, food services, building occupations, international travel etc. Covid-19 has also led to delays of recruitment process or job losses in areas with a strong human interaction element, such as arts and culture. However, due to the conditions, the use of techniques such as remote working and online selling increased, while at the same time various practices with limited use in the past, such as furloughs, were also widespread. **(Lund et al, 2020)<sup>93</sup>**

One practice that many organizations in general use in order to deal with a temporary demand crisis, such as during a recession, is labor hoarding. Labor hoarding is a means of avoiding massive and intensive layoffs. When an organization decides to implement labour hoarding, it reduces working hours and / or the average output per worker in order to retain its employees. **(Branka, and Pouliakas,2020)<sup>92</sup>**

From the point of view of an experienced manager, closing (even temporarily) an organization and massive layoffs are not effective solutions to the problem. This crisis, however, is something unique in modern history. Organizations are able to survive for a certain period of time and certainly not too long without operating. In this case the various forms of state aid (reduced tax prepayment, reduced taxation etc) combined with the facilitation of commercial loans to organizations from banks are very useful measures in dealing with liquidity problems and permanent job loss. **(Baert, 2021)<sup>96</sup>**

Organizations found themselves in the difficult position to take immediate decisions and actions that would greatly affect their future development and even their survival. At the beginning, they had to evaluate whether it was possible for them to continue operating, despite the lockdown they had in their countries. They had to assess the impact of the lockdown on demand and whether it would be in their interest to continue their operation, taking into account the costs that would be created, such as payroll, rent, taxation, etc and

compare them with their possible revenues. Some organizations temporarily decided that it would be in their favor to suspend their activities while others decided to turn to alternative ways / practices, eg online selling or Telework and continue working.

Depending on the decisions that business leaders would make, the business strategy should also be modified:

- Modification of business strategy and workforce model

In case the organization continues to operate, the optimal way of working must be found through a combination of remote work and on-site work. In case the organization temporarily suspends its activity, it must be decided the way the organization would treat its employees. Some possible actions are layoffs, contract modifications or take no measures.

- Motives to employees

The organization has to motivate its employees to improve their flexibility and skills in order to cope with the difficulties of the new working environment. The pandemic had impacted, among others, the psychology of the workers as their daily lives were affected and this situation must be taken seriously by the organizations. An effective measure would be an extended use of telework.

- Creating a nourish social capital

Remote work has also changed the way knowledge and experiences are transmitted among workers. Whereas in the past this process took place in the workplace, now new ways must be found in order to achieve this. Some possible ways could be the rotation of employees working remotely at regular intervals to work on-site (if possible), frequent meetings via videoconference such as through the platform "Zoom" so that employees can exchange views and communicate.

It is no coincidence that in a short period of time the use of conference calls, video chats and file sharing has multiplied. The IT department could also create applications that would allow the direct communication of employees in cases where problems arose at work and they need help. (Coppola and Poirrel,2021)<sup>97</sup>

According to an IZA research, based on data from year 2020, on the effects of the pandemic on organizations in the countries of Southern Europe (Greece, Italy, Portugal, Malta, Croatia and Cyprus) the following findings were emerged (**Khorana et al, 2021**)<sup>98</sup>:

- Firm Closures

In Greece, the 6.87% of the respondents claimed that they would close their business operation or have already closed permanently, while the 49.71% of respondents said they have closed temporarily at least one time during a pandemic. The above data are conditional as the effects of the pandemic still affect organizations. The highest percentages of permanent closures appeared in Italy (36.14%) while 66.10% of Italian organizations state that they have closed at least once temporarily.

- Changes in the way of working

The key element that is common in the participants in all countries is the increase of online business activities. This situation refers to a range of activities, which includes from increasing online selling, increasing transactions through e-banking, increasing telework in organizations, etc. The highest percentages appear in Greece, with 29.88% of organizations stating that there is an increase in online business activities, followed by Malta with 27.93%. Also 30.68% of organizations in Greece started or increased the use of remote work, with the highest percentages appearing in Malta with 47.06%.

- Impact on Employment

As already mentioned, the pandemic has affected working conditions, among others. The organizations tried to retain their permanent workers mainly through the aid programs they received from the government (for example through furloughs programs) but these decisions have affected the workers who did not belong to the above category. This specific survey refers to temporary workers and states that in Greece the gap created by layoffs and recruitment is about 15%, as 5.76% of organizations increased the number of their temporary workers while 20.78% reduced them. Malta follows with 13% and the lowest percentages are observed in Croatia and Italy, with 5% and 8% respectively.

- Gender

The research shows an overall reduction of the average number of female employees in permanent full time job positions. Organizations are not necessarily the only responsible



for these findings. Many women in families with double income, where both parents had to work, either on site or through telework, may had to leave their jobs as they struggled to take care of their children, as schools in most of the countries were closed for a large period of time.

- Government support

The 84.42% of Greek organizations stated that they received some kind of assistance (through either from government or through local government) and this is the highest percentage compared to the other countries participating in this survey. The lowest percentage occurs in Portugal where only one in three organizations (30.75%) received some kind of assistance.

## **5.4. Pandemic and workers**

A key impact of the pandemic was the decline in GDP in almost every country, which was followed by a decline in demand for goods and services, which in turn led to a decline in demand for labor. (Baert, 2021)<sup>96</sup>

Before the pandemic, the labor market flourished enormously. In particular, from 14.6 million employees in 2002 it reached the number of 21.2 million employees in 2019, an increase which was mainly due to the increased participation of women and employees in the age groups over 55 years old. It is the responsibility of every country, and consequently of every organization, to find the best solution in order to cope with this crisis. One way to deal with it is through increasing remote working and alternative work arrangements. It is worth to mention that before Covid-19 the percentage of employees through alternative work arrangements was 20% -30% of all jobs positions. (Lund et al, 2020)<sup>93</sup>

Based on an ILO research (2021)<sup>99</sup> Covid-19 has also led to a reduction in total working hours. This is a result of the inactivity of organizations, situation which in turn has led to a reduction in jobs positions and working hours. The categories of workers who were affected the most were women (15% more than men) and young workers (8.7% vs. 3.7% of older workers), who also saw their post-support labor income decline. According to the research, this crisis is the biggest crisis in labor market since the Great Depression of the 1930s. The

high degree of market uncertainty depends on the evolution of the pandemic and the policies of governments in favor of organizations.

The pandemic has led to changes in the labour market and it becomes clear that in the recovery phase organizations will face problems with their employees. Organizations have to cope with the aging pool of employees, the search for talent to fill open positions, the work mobility of high-skilled professionals in order to find better working conditions (situation which is more intense in cases of crises), etc. All of the above lead an increasing number of organizations to change their strategy by giving more emphasis on the recruitment process and approaching alternative workforce. (Lund et al, 2020)<sup>93</sup>

#### **5.4.1. Pandemic and contingent workers**

Covid-19 did not leave the labor market of contingent workers unaffected. In particular, in this market, two opposing forces "clashed": on the one hand, the decline in demand led companies to limit their activities, a situation which had a direct impact on their employees. Some organizations preferred the solution of layoffs, others retained the number of their employees and others retained the number of their employees but at reduced hours. Some categories of contingent workers belong to the category of nonessential staff, so they were the first to be hit and found themselves without a job.

On the other hand, the increase in the use of computers and technology and the transfer of business activities from office-based to home-based has made it easier for some categories of contingent workers to keep their jobs, such as freelancers. Also the percentage of contingent workers increased due to the modification of contracts of full time permanent employees, sometimes involuntary, in order to keep their jobs.

Some categories of contingent workers are mentioned next and the way the pandemic has affected them is analyzed.

- Teleworkers

Organizations started using telework in order not only to maintain their employees and continue operating (in cases it was possible) but also for safety reasons and protection of their employees. (European Commission, 2020)<sup>100</sup>

According to recent research of the CXC (2021)<sup>101</sup>, the pandemic is going to change the way, the time and the place we work. In particular, before the pandemic, the 44% of organizations which participated in the research did not allow their employees to work from their home. However, the data from 03/2021 showed a shift in this situation as now the 88% of organizations either made it mandatory or encouraged work from home. It is also expected that by the end of 2021, when in theory normality will have returned, 25% -30% of employees will continue to work from their space.

Based on the results of the same research, almost 8 in 10 (77%) executives believe that in the next 5 years full time employees will be replaced by freelancers, as 32% of participants already replace full timers with contingent workers.

In Europe at this moment more than 100 million employees work through remote working, with the 45% of them for the first time. For these employees, who were not familiar with this way of working, their transition to the new reality was challenging. Nevertheless, employees evaluate this change as positive as they have more autonomy and flexibility in their work, while they have the opportunity to maintain work / life balance. (Coppola and Poirel,2021)<sup>97</sup>

There are some categories of employees, who are employed in sectors with a high degree of face to face interaction, such as sales workers, hair stylists, fitness instructors etc, and the nature of their work does not allow them to work through telework. At the same time, there are some other categories of workers, such as electrical and electronic trade workers and general and keyboard clerk, for which, despite the intensive use of technology and computers, their percentages in telework are around 8%. This can be explained by the fact that these categories of employees require close monitoring and constant control by their superiors and for these reasons there are additional restrictions regarding their place and time of work. (European Commission, 2020)<sup>100</sup>

It is mandatory, in order for telework to be efficient, not only the organization to have the appropriate infrastructure, which will allow employees to work from their place, but also to have a level of trust from the managers to the employees, which will let the employees to have a degree of autonomy in their work. Since this change in the way of work took place suddenly and without prior strategic planning, problems that will be based on the lack of trust between employees and managers may arise.

Organizations should allow their employees to be more autonomous and be able to work in a less workplace-centered environment. Employees should enjoy the trust of their employers in regard to the way and time they work but also they should also have the opportunity to take initiatives in their work. For their point of view, managers should be willing to delegate power and create more autonomous employees. Close supervision is not a solution and they have to provide their employees space to act alone. **(Lund et al, 2020)<sup>93</sup>**

It should be understood by organizations that employees could be productive without requiring either their physical presence in the workplace and or close supervision of their performance. This of course does not mean that there will be no control over their performance and the degree to which they complete the tasks assigned to them on time.

The overall sense of telework is positive as both employees and organizations realize its benefits, and it seems that a great number of organizations is going to a significant degree retain telework as a way of working in the future.

- Online labour markets

The pandemic also affected the online labor markets. In practice, two opposing forces “clashed” on these platforms: on the one hand, the increase of online operations boosted online labour markets and increased their traffic, but on the other hand, the decline in demand, due to economic downturn, led many organizations to limit their use of online platforms and alternative work arrangements in order to retain their permanent employees.

As far as the increase of the use of online platforms is concerned, many organizations preferred to hire various categories of employees through web based platforms in order to participate in various projects instead of hiring workers through staffing firms/ agencies. In this case the number of employees through alternative work arrangements remained the same, the only thing that has changed is its composition.

Another opportunity for this category of workers is that although there was observed a general decline in labor demand, the demand for certain categories of professionals, such as information technology contractors has increased. This category of employees helped organizations to change their infrastructure and develop the appropriate mechanism to promote telework. These professionals very often had to present the new infrastructure and train permanent workers in the use of new technologies.

As far as the reduction of the use of online platforms is concerned, freelancers were in the most unfavorable positions for the following reasons:

- The nature of their work makes them sensitive to competition issues. They have to compete with other freelancers in order to take part in a project. It is easy to understand that during the pandemic the number of available projects was decreased so the competition is now more intense.
- Their work is basically project based and therefore there is no connection with the employer except for the time they work on a specific project
- Because of the fact that they work on project based projects as independent contractors they are sensitive to economic downturns. They are usually not fully protected by law and they do not have access to benefits

The pandemic has led to another paradox regarding to the freelancers. On the one hand there was an increase in supply to available freelancers as several employees saw a reduction in their working hours, some others found themselves on work suspension (measures to prevent mass layoffs) while others lost their jobs. On the other hand, some freelancers either left the platforms or reduced the available hours they could work on various projects. There are the following possibilities that could justify the above situation:

- a) There are freelancers with a permanent on-site job, who decreased the available hours they could work on various projects as a way to show loyalty to their organization
- b) Some freelancers got sick or had to look after people who got sick.
- c) Some freelancers were parents, whose housework increased because of the fact that schools were closed for a large period of time.

In general, the following conclusion can be drawn regarding the impact of the pandemic on alternative forms of work: on the one hand, we expect an increase in demand among some categories of workers, who work remotely. This is due to the fact that on line work replaces on site work. Demand is also expected to increase for certain categories of employees, mainly those who work in IT services.

These professionals could also belong to other categories of contingent workers, such as temporary professionals or part time professionals. This strategy is called the "distancing bonus". On the other hand, in order to secure permanent jobs, organizations had to reduce

"non-essential" professionals, such as temporary workers who serve the company in periods of increased demand or freelancers in non-critical projects. This strategy is referred as "downscaling loss". (Dunn et al, 2020)<sup>102</sup>

## 6. Conclusions

### 6.1 Conclusion

The basic conclusion that arises from this dissertation is how important is the proper utilization of contingent workforce, which could become a strategic advantage for organizations. With the appropriate planning, management and training, those professionals could help the organizations to evolve, operate efficiently and survive. According to recent surveys, a constantly increasing preference for this category of professionals is observed and this trend is going to increase the following years. (Dwyer, 2020)<sup>28</sup>, (CXC,2021)<sup>101</sup>.

In the introduction were mentioned the basic questions that this dissertation attempts to answer. In particular, as far as the first question about the categories of contingent workforce and its characteristics is concerned, it was discovered that the categories of those professionals are constantly evolving. The addition of new categories is due to the increasing participation of contingent workforce in organizations and the different roles they can play in them. At the beginning, contingent workforce consisted only of low skilled workers, who worked mainly as temporary workers and part time workers in order to cover sudden needs of the organizations. Nowadays organizations use contingent workforce as a strategic tool, so high skilled consultants, freelancers and teleworker are also observed. Every category of professionals covers a different need, not only from organizations' perspective but also from individuals' perspective.

The second question dealt with the reasons organizations and professionals seek these alternative work arrangements. From the organizations' side, they gain benefits from those professionals in their effort to deal with economic, technological, demographic and talent restrictions. Some categories of contingent workforce consist of high skilled and experienced professionals, other categories consist of workers who are always available for work, other categories consist of professionals who are able to work only from their space etc. So organizations are able to choose the appropriate professional for the position they want to cover. From the professionals' perspective, the changes of the mix of the generations which participate in the labor market, is expected to boost alternative work arrangements. Every generations has different needs and look for different thing from their work. The retirement of Silent Generation and Baby Boomers will be partly covered by Millennials

and Generation Z, two “digital” generations. These two generations are very familiar with technology and are very sensitive in “work / life balance” and “well-being” issues. They seek job positions which could offer them experience, ability to improve their skills and personal time. Also retirees sometimes work as consultants in order to increase their income.

The new mix of professionals (both permanent employees and contingent workforce) should be managed effectively. For the third question, the dissertation made references to the ways in which the HR department should be transformed and how could its operations (recruiting, selection, training, compensation and performance reviews) change. It is very important the development of a contingent workforce strategy, which could include the ways of management of those professionals.

A very important aspect for the modernization and the improvement of the efficiency of the HR department is the use of workforce analytics and the creation of the appropriate team that could deal with them. The development of this tool could improve not only the performance of the department but the performance of the organizations as well. The workforce team is able to analyse data from various sources and provide accurate findings to executives. Workforce analytics apply to every part of HR department’s operation, such as selection and recruitment process, planning, performance evaluation, etc and allow executives to make more accurate decisions, based on real-time data. It is very useful tool and the number of organizations which implement workforce analytics in their operations is increasing.

The findings of the dissertation concerning the use of contingent workforce in European countries are also remarkable and refer to the fourth question. These forms of work are more prevalent in the countries of Northern Europe, where professionals have strong digital skills, and high percentages of self-employed and working women are observed. The corresponding percentages in Greece are lower compared with the European Union average. This situation could be explained by the complex Greek legislation, which until recently did not protect fully those professionals, the misuse of contingent workforce, the low wages, the lack of technology knowledge etc. This situation seems to be changing in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic when many organizations showed an interest into all forms of nontraditional work in order to survive.



For the fifth question, the dissertation had to deal with the effect of the Covid – 19 pandemic. As an overall conclusion, it could be mentioned that the Covid-19 pandemic has greatly affected organizations and the labor market. Many organizations were forced to close permanently while most of them had to close temporary. The "lock down" measures imposed by the most governments around the world contributed to this.

In order to face this unprecedented crisis, governments have taken measures to support organizations and professionals affected by the pandemic. Tax reduction, business support allowances, assistance for loan repayment, emergency allowances to workers, etc. were given. These measures were not only intended to increase the liquidity of organizations but also to prevent mass layoffs.

The contingent workforce labor market seems to have evolved amid the pandemic. On the one hand there were categories of professionals who lost their jobs, mainly non-essential temporary workers and professionals in non-crucial projects, but on the other hand the increased use of technology gave a boost in many categories of professionals, such as freelancers and professionals in technology sectors.

## **6.2 Proposals for Further Research**

All the four questions posed in this dissertation from the beginning were answered. But the subject of the alternative forms of work is dynamic and the data are constantly changing. Future research could be conducted on how the mix of workforce (permanent employees and contingent workforce) is shaped within the organizations and the degree the HR department has changed its operations. A third point that could be analyzed would be the overall impact of the pandemic on organizations and professionals and the degree it has affected the contingent workforce market.

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